

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF RAINISOALAMBO (1844-1904), THE
FATHER OF REVIVALS, TO THE INDIGENIZATION OF THE
PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN MADAGASCAR: A HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVE.**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Suzette, my Children Narindra, Tantely, and Tsilavina whose encouragement, support, and understanding made it possible for me to be away from them during the entire period of study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

DECLARATION

This thesis (unless where specifically stated) is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other University for assessment or for any other purpose. I therefore submit it for the first time at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, as a partial fulfilment for Master of Theology in History of Christianity.

.....signed

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to carry out a historical analysis of “the contribution of Rainisoalambo, the father of revivals, to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar” and also to enrich the field of historical research for the Church in Madagascar. The revival movement is rooted in the Protestant Church history, so this research is intended to study the concept of indigenization through the preaching, sermons and teachings of Rainisoalambo.

There are two main Protestant churches in Madagascar: the Reformed Church (FJKM) and the Lutheran (FLM). The revival found within these churches inspired me to think about the power behind the Church growth in my country. Rainisoalambo contextualized the Gospel. He used indigenization as a strategy and its principles as a source of vitality for the Malagasy Protestant churches. He did not teach a new doctrine either. He helped the people of God to express their faith in Malagasy culture.

In the 20th century, the revival movement shifted from the perception of mass conversion and dramatic social changes to the revitalization of God’s people. Therefore, the fundamental question is: “What is the major contribution of Rainisoalambo as the father of revivals, to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar?” My hypothesis is that the revival of Rainisoalambo made a major contribution to the indigenization of churches in Madagascar.

Since “indigenization” is mainly the key word to be understood for this research, this study adopts a theoretical framework, which is informed by concept of cultural translation and phenomenological approach.

Since this research uses a historical perspective, it is important to practice the historical methodology: data collection for primary and secondary sources, potential oral interviews, criticism of data through assessing the genuineness of information sources and the presentation of information in accurate and readable form. The analytical

approach is adopted in this theoretical framework. In spite of times, the majority of data collected will be enough to accomplish this work.

MEANINGS OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

CMS: Church Missionary Society

ELC: Evangelical Lutheran Church

FFMA: Friends Foreign Mission Association

FFPM: Fiambonan'ny Fiangonana Protestanta eto Madagasikara (Federation of Protestant churches in Madagascar).

FFSM: Fiangonan'ny Fifohazan'ny mpianatry ny Tompo Soatanàna, Madagasikara. (Church of the Revival of the disciples of the Lord, in Soatanàna, Madagascar).

FJKM: Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara (Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar).

FLM: Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy (Malagasy Lutheran Church).

FPM: French Protestant Mission

LBM: Lutheran Board of Mission

LMS: London Missionary Society

NMS: Norwegian Missionary Society

SEFALA: Sehatra Fanomanana Laika (Centre of training for the lay persons).

SPG: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The task of this chapter

This thesis has as its objective to facilitate the comprehension of the indigenization of the Church in Africa generally, and, particularly, to carry out a historical analysis of the contribution of Rainisoalambo, the father of revivals, to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar. There are two main Protestant churches in Madagascar: the Reformed FJKM and the Lutheran FLM. These two churches founded a federation called the FFPM in 1913. In this study, the intent is to research the indigenization that was brought about by the Christians in the revival movement advanced by an indigenous person within Madagascar.

The beginning of colonization in Africa and Madagascar was particularly prominent in the 19th century. It was difficult to establish movements or associations, even if it was a religious movement, like the Revival. The colonial officials often confused the movements with a revolutionary threat or a nationalistic rebellion. The movements were not allowed to engage in liberation activities; not even particular religious organizations, apart from Church, were permitted. But during this difficult period, God had a plan to continue the propagation of the Gospel which the missionaries had started. Rainisoalambo appeared through the Revival movement as an indigenous missionary aiming to indigenize the Malagasy Protestant churches.

In the process of the indigenization, the Gospel can be likened to a human person in whom God had incarnated himself. In contrast to this, Karl Jaspers (2000:36) thinks, "The word of Jesus is not a word to live by, but a word that annihilated all the values to which the religious institutions claim to send the man".

Nevertheless we ask ourselves this question: How can the Gospel be transmitted and how can it touch the faith of people? Then, this introductory chapter maps out the framework of this thesis by first stating the problem of study, motivation, delimitation and method.

1.2 Problems and hypothesis

In this thesis, it is necessary to understand the work that has already been done in this domain and to stress some shortfalls and challenges. A problem with the indigenization of the Church in Africa is highlighted by the fact that many questions relating to the indigenous traditions are raised in local churches. There is a conflict between the Africans' expressions of faith brought by the Gospel and the indigenous culture. We call this phenomenon inculturation.

The key to the whole matter is how the Church understands and applies the notion of "inculturation". The Catholic Church became aware of this problem and proposed this term in order to see how it could maintain the message of the Gospel in African culture without deviating from its true path.

John Mbiti (1978:273) explains that when the Gospel and culture meet, and if the Christian faith is generated, then the product is Christianity. Thus, the Gospel is proclaimed, understood, and believed by people in their different cultures throughout the world. African culture is one of these cultures to which God has entrusted the Gospel.

Unfortunately, western missionaries brought to Africa the Gospel within their culture. In other words, they brought to Africa a western Christianity with an evangelical message wrapped in a western culture. They did not consider the indigenous culture, such as customs, languages, and so on. But without culture, people cannot encounter the true Gospel through Christianity.

Thus, it is a fallacy to isolate Christianity in its essence. Colonialism and Christianity were linked in such a way that it is currently impossible to isolate them. Both colonizers

and missionaries brought their culture to African people who completely confused the two. Thus, as bearers of a new culture called civilization, without consideration of the indigenous culture, there is no difference between the missionaries and the conquering Europeans. Priests, pastors, and colonizers played similar roles at the time of the conquest and colonization of the African continent, as M. Moeller (1955:208) confirms: "It is by the Christian civilization that the systematic and industrial exploitation of the man by the capital took birth."¹

The African culture was underestimated, indeed denigrated for a long time. The Africans felt as the "pagans" had that to be truly Christian, they had to westernize themselves. Elsewhere, this became a source of fascination for them. Thus, the myth of the European that urged the African to become as the European, not only in his life, but also in his way of thinking, was born.

Sartre rightly says in his book *Orphée noir*:

The white enjoyed three thousand years of the privilege of seeing without anyone seeing him; he was pure look, the light of his eyes pulled all things, and the whiteness of his skin was an illumination. White man, white because he was man, white as the day, white as the truth, white as the virtue, lights the creation as a torch, unveiled secret essence and white of the humans beings (1978: 24).²

Nevertheless, times have changed. The mission did not carry itself out as planned, but in a different way only some decades later. Now, the mission prefers to take the form of a "partnership" with the African churches. Anthropologists, sociologists, theologians and other researchers admit the existence of the African culture. The concern of the African churches of today is to rediscover their bases. They want to say, it is necessary to do an inventory, of some sort, of the African cultural heritage.

Africans adhere to foreign religions. In other words, they do not separate traditional religion from revealed religion, as the former has stayed anchored in their spirit as a

¹ According to my translation

² According to my translation

mother tongue and serves as the foundation of their human expression. They express themselves better in their mother tongue.

African society is a dynamic culture in constant evolution and in mutation at the end of 20th century. Inculturation does not have to attach, revive or promote folklore for the customs; the traditions were influenced by western civilization that deeply modified African identity. So, the necessity is not to return to the ancestral culture but to adapt the African tradition to modernity.

It cannot be said that culture in the churches is a unique preoccupation, but the research of African Christianity is very necessary, as Kwame Bediako (2000:263) demonstrates, "the Christian Gospel must be adapted to the African realities".

This led to an intellectual criticism of the attempt made by some African Christian theologians to give roots to Christianity in the full African context by appropriating and integrating the pre-Christian primal cultural tradition. The 'Christianizing' of the pre-Christian tradition could also be seen as one of the most important achievements of African theology. Perhaps it is important to clarify the Africanisation that is meant here. The emergence of such significant communities of African Christians as exist today can be measured by the degree to which the Christian message has been internalized. In this manner, the African Christianity became apparent.

This process begins with recapitulating older themes and ideas and then reconstituting these as the basis for renewal. Translation, thus, came to invest Christianity with indigenous solidity. The vernacular became a necessity for the life of religion, the soil that nurtured the plant until its eminence acquired doctrinal heights.

The principal question at the time of the reflection on the subject of African Christianity was how to express faith in "Christ of the Gospel" through African tradition. The chief concern of this study is the major contribution of Rainisoalambo as the father of revivals to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar.

Below are the sub-problems arising from the main one: What are the advantages or disadvantages to the Malagasy Protestant churches of studying indigenization? Perhaps as a progress to independence, because all administration and development of the Church is in the hand of indigenous leaders, Christians feel that they live the faith within their own culture, languages and local values. Maybe indigenization means stagnation or return to uncivilized life. But Rainisoalambo used indigenization as a strategy and its principles as a source of vitality for the Malagasy Protestant churches. Why do the teachings of Rainisoalambo still remain as part of the Protestant churches in Madagascar? What theology did the British missionaries have to help him to be a lay leader, as he had followed the training of the London Missionary Society (LMS) before his conversion? The hypothesis posed in this work is that the revival of Rainisoalambo made a major contribution to the indigenization of churches in Madagascar.

1.2.1 The background to the problem

In 1894, the monarchy of Merina³ was in decline. The Malagasy people lived in a period of transition between the kingdom of Madagascar and French colonization. The rural inhabitants, especially in Soatanàna (the village in which the revival was rooted), as well as those of Betsileo⁴, were oppressed by the payment of a local tax, affected by an epidemic of fever, and attacked by raiders.

According to Thunem et al (2001:10), the officers of the armed forces and the military sent by the authority of Merina, during the last monarchy, went from village to village in the Betsileo area, to oblige all men over ten years of age, except militaries and slaves, to pay tax. The Bara and Sakalava, neighbouring tribes of the Betsileo, came to rob, capture, and kill. They stole cows, burnt the villages, killed the men and captured the children and women. In addition to this, smallpox and severe malaria were rife in this area.

³ Merina is the tribe in the highlands that had governed Madagascar during the 18th and 19th century. Imerina is the region where Merina lived.

⁴ Betsileo is Rainisoalambo's tribe and also the region of the southern highland of Madagascar, in Fanarantsoa Province.

The Roman Catholics, particularly the Jesuit priests, took advantage of the French colonization to persecute the Protestant churches. During the monarchical period, the Protestant Church comprised the majority of the Christians and was a state religion, whilst the Roman Catholic were in the minority in Madagascar, as Mervyn Brown (1995:191) states: "The Jesuits fulminated against the success of their heretical rivals in having Protestantism established as the state religion."

This was not well received by the colonists who came from France, a country dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. The Jesuit missionaries claimed that the Protestant Christians were collaborating with the British to overthrow the French. They argued that only Roman Catholic Christians were genuine supporters of French rule. According to Bonar A. Gow (1979: 230):

The Jesuits were determined to break the Congregational hold over Imerina and Betsileo, and they hoped to use the French conquest as their chief weapon. The first tactic they employed to win over Protestant members was to tell them that to be Protestant was to be against the French administration, while to attend a Catholic Church and to accept a Catholic baptism was to show loyalty to France. The second tactic employed by the Jesuits involved the use of force.

The persecution and oppression of the local people gave rise to a nationalistic rebellion movement called *menalamba* (red robes) against the French colonization in many parts of Madagascar. They fought against both the colonists and the Christian religion, because for them, colonization was synonymous with the Christian religion. Their banner had the ironically famous slogan, "Bible before colonization", and they killed many Protestant missionaries as Gow (1979:229) put it:

When, in November 1895, a band of *menalamba* began to move on Antananarivo, they passed through the town of Arivonimamo and William and Lucy Johnson and their daughter were among their first victims. The Johnsons, Father Jacques Berthieu, Rev Benjamin Escande, and Paul Minault were the missionaries killed by the resisters, though several others had near escapes.

Moreover, James Rabehatonina (2000:15,16) affirms that through the mission of the LMS, the Protestant churches, especially the Congregationalists, were established in several sectors of Betsileo. The life style of Christians appeared as very distinctive. A Betsileo peasant, and also an idol-keeper, named Rainisoalambo, wished to become a

Christian. Someone suggested to him that he accept the baptism of the missionary in order to be a catechist, and thus obtain money from the missionary. He accepted because he hoped to obtain the money. He became a catechist, but he continued to love his talismans. Unfortunately, he was disappointed, as he was not given any money by the missionary. The payments of the local tax oppressed him, and sickness had disrupted his life.

In 1894, Rainisoalambo was deeply rooted in his traditional religion. He existed in a complex reality: on the one hand, he was in the presence of the English Protestant Church conducted by the missionaries of the LMS, and on the other hand, he was in the presence of French colonialists. Nevertheless, he managed to hold himself distant from the foreign cultures and preserve his own culture. If he remained in the Protestant Church, he could later become an LMS minister and conduct his life accordingly.

The Church is the people's community of God; in other words, it is "the agent of God on earth." According to Melvin Hodges (2001: 65), "it [the Church] is the way by which God speaks to the world; God has no other agency redemptive on earth".

Bureaucracy, centralization and hierocracy, as one can observe, for example, in the recent developments in African Protestant churches, occupy an important place, not only in the state or government, but also in the Church. Thus, it became urgent to communicate the idea that "persons" and "community" are effectively the two poles that form the biblical reality of the Church. One can ask that if the principal concern of a Church is to save institutions, will it be in a position to save persons?

This question is particularly significant as saving individuals is not the same thing as having a growing number of persons who go to Church on Sundays, who speak the same language, and have the same feelings.

To return to Rainisoalambo, an important event that had marked the beginning of his ministry was the conversion of twelve people in his village who had been deeply rooted

in “idolatry”. Rainisoalambo found himself at this event, which was the particular work of the Holy Spirit. According to A. Thunem (1934:22) who was a missionary in Soatanàna (1903-1906)⁵, Rainisoalambo had converted twelve people who later became the disciples of the Lord. Each of them was ill and they held their first prayer meeting and devotion at Rainisoalambo’s home on 9th June 1895. It was similar to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, as they received the Holy Spirit. These twelve people were the first fruits of Rainisoalambo’s ministry; they later became his close collaborators.

Rainisoalambo’s strategy consisted of training *iraka* (apostles) and developing community life in the light of the Scripture, in the village of Soatanàna. The *iraka* travelled many times throughout the whole country for the establishment of new churches. These churches were entrusted to the missionary society in each particular region.

Elisée Escande (1926:65) gives the following example. In Toamasina district, between 1907 and 1924, the number of churches established increased from 13 to 124. The fire of revival had illuminated the whole region in two decades.

My hypothesis in this study is that Rainisoalambo’s most important contribution to the indigenization of the Protestant churches was the revival movement. Thus, the history of the revival movement in Madagascar is inseparable from the process of indigenization.

1.2.2. The pertinence of indigenization

Indigenization is important today for the future of the churches and the announcement of the Gospel in different cultures. It must not limit itself to a certain part of the African continent, but rather influence all African Christians.

With regard to indigenization, the aim is to help local churches to reflect on the reality of understanding the Gospel within their own cultures and the global vision. This is

⁵ In *Ministerialbok Dagbok bak i boken* (ministerial book of Soatanàna) No 555 Soatanàna 1877-1906.

necessary for contextualization, inculturation and authentic transformation. Thus this work can be dedicated to all those who work for the incarnation of the Gospel in different cultures.

1.3 Motivation

As a parish Minister in the Reformed Church in Madagascar, I was interested in researching the work of Rainisoalambo as the father of the revival movement of the Protestant churches in Madagascar.

The revival found within these churches inspired me to think about the power behind the growth of Church in Madagascar. Rainisoalambo contextualized the Gospel. He did not teach a new doctrine. He helped the people of God to express their faith in the Malagasy culture. This research also aims to enhance the historical research in Madagascar.

The revival movement is rooted in Protestant Church history. In accordance with this, given Rainisoalambo's link to the Protestant Church, this research is intended to study the concept of indigenization through the preaching, sermons and teaching of Rainisoalambo.

It is important to understand the meaning of indigenization in Madagascar, and to analyze it effectively in order to improve the Church and society. Moreover, as a member of the Protestant Church, I think that the exploration of this topic will contribute to defining the Malagasy Protestant identity in both African and global contexts.

Furthermore, due to its ecumenical perspective, an exploration of the history of the contribution of Rainisoalambo to indigenization in the Malagasy Protestant churches will reinforce the link that has existed since 1913 between the Reformed and the Lutheran Churches in Madagascar. This exploration will also enhance the cooperation that the revival movement has created within the Christian churches, and aid the Malagasy people in rediscovering their cultural value-system.

1.4 Delimitations of the study

As a Malagasy student in a School of Theology in South Africa, I am conscious of the limits that the subject imposes on me. My work limits itself to Madagascar. At present, I am also limited in time by the academic requirements.

The study of the contribution of Rainisoalambo to indigenization in the Malagasy Protestant churches is indeed an important topic that this thesis does not seek to exhaust in its entirety at a Master of Theology level. Therefore, my study will follow an historical method. But it does not prevent me from drawing on a variety of sociological and anthropological insights where necessary and applicable.

1.5. Methodology

Since this research uses a historical perspective, it is important to practice a historical methodology: data collection from primary and secondary sources, criticism of data through assessing the genuineness of information sources and the presentation of information in accurate and readable form. For collecting of these data, library research has formed the primary approach through which this study intends to achieve its objective, some archives in Madagascar such as those of FJKM, Lutheran, National, have been consulted. Additionally, some interviews have been conducted in different places in Madagascar, such as Antananarivo, Soatanàna.

This work will conclude with an argument in favour of indigenization, in order to encourage African Churches to live the Gospel through their modes of thought and feeling.

1.6. Description of chapters

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter **One** serves as an introduction to the study. It focuses on: the problem statement, a background to the study, the motivation for the study, a chapter description and the methodology. In so doing, I intend to lay the foundations for this thesis.

Chapter **Two** is set apart in order to explore the different meanings of indigenization as the key word of this thesis. This chapter opens the way to understanding this research, in the light of the main problem of this study, which is the question: What is the major contribution of Rainisoalambo as the father of revivals to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar? Different meanings of indigenization and its derivation, such as adaptation and contextualization, will appear in this chapter.

Chapter **Three** deals with the planting of churches in Betsileo, the region where Rainisoalambo lived. It will explore the general historical background of churches in Madagascar (1818-1870), the propagation of the Christian religion, and its arrival in the Betsileo area. Moreover, the traditional religions of Betsileo and the political context will be briefly described in this chapter.

Chapter **Four** examines the relationship between Rainisoalambo and the established Church. To understand his contribution to indigenization, it will be useful to look at his biography. Then this will be followed by a study of the contribution of Rainisoalambo to the churches in the preaching of the word of God, both inside and outside of the Church. In Africa, the majority of the “revived” left the established churches to join the newly formed churches, known as African Independent Churches. In Madagascar, the revival did not affect the churches established by the Christians; instead, they remained and strengthened the established churches. This is the greatest significance of this revival, because it becomes an instrument used by the Church to propagate the Gospel and the field of the Church’s mission.

Chapter Five is the core part of our thesis: it deals with the indigenization brought by Rainisoalambo to the Protestant churches in Madagascar. This chapter illustrates how Rainisoalambo practiced Christianity in Malagasy thought and how he spread the Gospel so that the Malagasy people could understand it through their own cultures.

Finally, **Chapter Six** gives a summary and the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

INDIGENIZATION

2.1 The task of this chapter

Since the mission of the Church is to propagate the Gospel in the world, according to Mark 16: 15: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"⁶; hence the Gospel needs to transmit the message in the vernacular language and in the culture of the evangelized people. Saint Paul stresses this concept in I Corinthians 9: 19-20: " Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible: to the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law." History has demonstrated that culture and civilization evolve continually. There is a tension between the message of the Gospel and the culture of any given context. The problem is that all cultures are relative. Therefore the Gospel must enlighten the culture and its richness for these include all people.

Through indigenization, the Church can more effectively transmit the message of the Gospel than in the missionary's period, because Christians sought to adopt Christianity into their own cultures. In the context of indigenization, the Gospel adopts also of a theological principle that is founded on inculturation. The question of indigenization is directly linked to the one of unity in variety. There is an actual challenge of African churches as John Baur (1994:103) states:

While European exploration and colonization were greatly instrumental in planting and establishing the Church, African independence helped much to speed up the process of her indigenization and inculturation.

This chapter explores the different meanings of "indigenization" which is the key word of this thesis. Charles Kraft (1978:304) points out that since the middle of the nineteenth

⁶ New International Version Bible.

century; the concept of an indigenous Church has gained greater prominence as an ideal of most missionary activity. The concept of indigenization itself was the product of a particular period in mission history when missionaries came from the west to other lands. For the believers, the Church is universal, and the usefulness of the term is in question because it is tied to the unique objective of missions, and to the goal of independence churches.

The definition of the word “indigenization” at the beginning of this thesis will make it easy to achieve the objective of this work. Thus, in this chapter, I intend to explain the meaning of indigenization and its derivatives.

2.2 Definitions of indigenization

Defining the term “indigenization” with respect to the Church is indeed a challenging exercise. The difficulty is due to the fact that this word is not found in the dictionaries, and it is also a new word in the theology of “contextualization” and inculturation. However, it exists and connotes several things especially when used in connection with the Church. For this reason, it is necessary to define it clearly, in a precise way and within its proper context.

2.2.1. Attempt at definitions

The adjective *indigenous* is derived from the Latin compound *in + de + genus* (within + from + to beget) and means “produced, growing, or living naturally in a particular region or environment.” It refers to that which is native or born from within, in contrast to that which is foreign or alien.⁷ It means that the indigenous people are the people who lived in a place, were born and grew up there for a very long time before other people came to live there.

⁷ Herald Press, in <http://www.mhsc.ca/encyclopedia/contents/154ME.html>, 2004, p.1

From this it is clear that indigenous people are those whose ancestors lived in the same place. Foreigners and immigrant people are excluded from this definition of indigenous people. In short, indigenous people are people who live and stay at the same place for a long time. In reference to the situation of the clergy in Southern Africa, we can note with Philippe Denis (1995:10):

Some authors only consider those clergy to be indigenous whose ancestors were born on the African continent. They refuse to put in the same category African clergy, who struggle to harmonize their own cultural heritage and the ecclesiastical culture inherited from the missionaries, and locally born European-minded clergy, who exercise their ministry in their own cultural environment. This definition, however, excludes the Indian and coloured clergy, whose ancestors were born outside Africa. For this reason, we opted here for a broad definition of the word. "Indigenous" is to be understood as locally born. Any clergy who were born on the African soil are to be seen as indigenous.

Denis (1995:11) concludes that the first actors of the indigenization process were the indigenous people themselves. It means that the indigenous people are actors in the full sense of the term, particularly where indigenization is concerned. Eduardo Hoornaert (1995:21) emphasizes that the principal actors of indigenization are the ordinary people, and not the missionaries. People are signifiers, "meaning-makers." They use religion, and by so doing, they give it structure and direction. Indigenization is the very *raison d'être* of religion.

So, to indigenize the Church, theologians and leaders such as ministers, clergy, pastors, and priests should reinterpret Christianity in accordance with the indigenous culture and language of the ordinary people. Language is very important because it produces the real dynamics of indigenization, which is the heart of evangelization.

On indigenization, we can refer to Bolaji Idowu (1965: 11):

By indigenization, the Church should bear the unmistakable stamp of the fact that she is *the Church of God in the local context*. It should no longer be an out-post or a colony of Rome, Canterbury, or Westminster Central Hall in London, or the vested interest of some European or American Missionary Board. It should not be an institution acknowledging a human overlord elsewhere outside its local setting. This must not be a marionette with its strings in the hands of some foreign manipulators.

Indigenization in this context would make the Church a community that can afford to give the native people a chance to worship God in their own cultural setting. That is, in a way that is compatible with their spiritual temperament, singing to their God in their own way or praying and hearing the word in an idiom, which is clearly intelligible to them (Idowu, 1965:11). In short the indigenized Church is the spiritual home of indigenous Christians, a place where they acquire an atmosphere of spiritual freedom.

Looking at various African indigenous churches sheds light on this issue. The Zion Christian Church in South Africa is indigenized. According to Simon Moripe (1995:102), it is one of the largest indigenous churches in Southern Africa and also the stronghold of Africanization. The leadership of this Church has successfully addressed the problem of the foreignness of Christianity in Southern Africa. The Zion Christian Church sees the mainline churches (churches formerly established by missionaries) as western-oriented churches, which have so far Europeanized, institutionalized and intellectualized Christianity in the sub-Saharan region of Africa. These churches have no future in Africa because Africans are not merely intellectual, but they have feelings, a strong desire for fellowship and mutual concerns, which are basic elements of a true and meaningful African religious life. So, the duty of the leader is to indigenize the religion as Moripe has put it:

Many Africans flock to the Zion Christian Church in particular because what this Church does is meaningful. Here African Christians get a true sense of belonging and fellowship based on African spirituality. They find a deep sense of relationship, of caring and sharing. They are not individualized as in the western-oriented churches. Christianity is expressed not in opposition to the African culture but within this context (1995:103).

The founders of African instituted churches succeeded in indigenizing Christianity by making it relevant to everyday life, especially through the use of practical rituals and techniques, which we find are not encouraged in western-oriented churches. Such leaders engaged themselves in a massive attempt to synthesize the apostolic teaching with authentic African insights and culture, based on biblical criteria derived from a vernacular translation of the Scriptures. We now need to look at the various meanings of the term indigenization.

2.2.2 The changing meanings of the term indigenization

Most contributing scholars, especially the “missiologists” and anthropologists, agree that an indigenous Church is one that expresses itself in culturally acceptable thought forms and practices. An indigenous Church is a Church born and maintained within a given culture by the people of that culture without any direct outside human influence or control. The scholars show differing shades of understanding, thus emphasizing different perspectives.

A. R. Tippet (1979:69) sees indigenization as something in which the missionary still has a definite part to play, but a very different part from the traditional one. H. Kasdorf (1979:76), on the other hand, seems to imply that an indigenous Church cannot be the result of missions but rather of indigenized churches and people movements. He clearly states that an indigenized Church is one that has been planted by a foreign mission but has come under native leadership and support without foreign domination.

In D. J. Hesselgrave (1978:831)’s view, indigenization led to the erection of ethnological systems, a process in which very few outsiders can be involved as it requires intimate knowledge of the culture which very few outsiders ever attain. He does, however, admit that outsiders can make a contribution if they are open to learning. He asserts that, strictly speaking, an indigenous Church is a Church of the native.

R. Taber (1979:3731) notes that there is good and bad indigenization. Good indigenization makes the Gospel message intelligible to the receptor in his thought forms. Bad indigenization diffuses and confuses the Gospel.

Kraft (1979:321) agrees with Tippet that “the true hallmark of an indigenous Church is when the indigenous people of a community think of the Lord as their own, not a foreign Christ; when they do things as unto the Lord meeting the cultural needs around them, worshipping in patterns they understand; when their congregations function in

participation in a body, which is structurally indigenous; then you have an indigenous Church.”

Lamin Sanneh (1989:165) confirms that indigenization is a way of acquiring knowledge of the indigenous languages that brought missionaries into sphere of religious customs. In other words, indigenization is the adoption of vernacular languages and customs of one area or region. The value of vernacular languages is the base of the indigenization.

However, for acquiring the vernacular languages that is the base of indigenization, it requires the use of a translation. In accordance to Sanneh (1989:51,53), translation is the source of success of Christianity across cultures, a fundamental concession to the vernacular. And Kwame Bediako (1995:122) insists, if it is translatability that produces “indigeneity”, then a truly indigenous Church should also be a translating Church, reaching continually to the heart of the culture of its context and incarnating the translated word.

To summarize, we can say that the actual conception of indigenization is the fruit of a long evolution, characterized by the usage of different terms such as adaptation, inculturation, africanization or contextualization.

Indigenization resembles adaptation, but it puts the accent on the promotion of African pastoral ministry: the African people themselves became the ministers and missionaries in their countries. Adaptation must imply a selection of certain customs or rites of the indigenous population. Therefore it was necessary to understand all “African traditional practices” in order to insert them in Christianity. Adrian Hastings (1966:12) affirms that after the Second Vatican Council, adaptation became a household word in the theological arena of the Catholic Church. Theologians and many missionaries busied themselves with it. During the same period, churches felt the necessity of adapting the Gospel to the local cultures. This theology of adaptation consisted in using the elements of African culture in the Christian religious ceremonies.

Aylward Shorter (1980:46) said: "it is a fact to recognize that the faith must become culture, the faith allows the Christians to be citizens of the Kingdom, while the life method worldly, language, traditions and customs transform the man to a citizen of the world". Thus indigenization rests on the interaction of faith and culture. We can note that adaptation was criticized by most of the theologians. According to Alexis Kagame (1983:25), " adaptation was not sufficient for an effective indigenization, other concepts must accompany it, such as contextualization, incarnation, and so on."

The 1974 Synod of Catholic bishops on the evangelization of the modern world strongly emphasized the need for the incarnation of the Church's life and message in every community as well as for its authenticity⁸. The general opinion is that God is foreign; he came from heaven when he revealed himself to man to become human. The theological basis on which, indigenization rests, is one of incarnation. Jesus Christ incarnated himself to save humanity. The Christians would have a mission to incarnate the Gospel in the different cultures. This is the indigenization notion that puts the accent on the culture as an instrument to realize or incarnate the Gospel in daily life.

2.3 Structural problems of indigenization

Several problems occur due to misunderstanding the real meanings of indigenization. One of the problems is that one thinks only to separate the Gospel from the western culture that envelops it, and changes the content of it, for example to change the culture of Jews in the Gospel to the local culture. The confusion of meaning often draws indigenization only to hate those of the missionaries who started it.

2.3.1 Confusion over the meaning of indigenization

Many indigenous churches confuse the meaning of indigenization. Many of them confuse indigenization with independence. When they have independence, they feel free to do anything. This is justified because of their dislike for what the missionaries have done.

⁸ *Dossier le Synode des évêques, Documentation Catholique, 1974 No 9*

In his article “Indigenous Principles in Mission Today”, Tippet has noted the problem of indigenization within the new indigenous churches. The majority of these churches deal with structural problems of independence and leadership. Tippet (1979: 60-64) analyses this phenomenon: the laypersons preach even though they do not have any theological training. Some of them consider theology as indoctrination by the missionaries and brought by the colonial system. They have their own decision-making mechanisms, the right structure for selfhood with regard to stewardship and the programs of Christian *diakonia*. So, Tippet urged missionaries to hand over the churches to native leadership as soon as possible. The goal of missions, he said, is the planting of self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches. When this is achieved the missionaries should disband or move on (: 64). But Tippet believes that unless there is involvement and participation of the local Church, indigeneity is not yet been adequately achieved. He rightly feels that unless cultural symbols are part of the communication, the Church is still foreign (Tippet 1979:69). The duty of the responsible is to teach them the real sense of indigenization.

2.3.2 Problems of adaptation

Even though the Gospel came to Africa a long time ago, and was translated into the vernacular languages; it has not always succeeded to integrate itself completely in the African culture. The inheritance of the mother-church from the missionaries still remains in the indigenous churches. For example, western hymns were translated and sung to western tunes and little emphasis was placed on the development of local hymnologies. Western styles of prayer, preaching, dress, and Church architecture were introduced, and drums, dramas, dances, and clapping of hands were generally rejected as pagan. It is difficult for some indigenous Christians who are still keeping the missionaries’ teaching to adapt to the local culture that they consider as not spiritual. Kraft (1978: 289) confirms that “many now criticize African theologians because these people do not want things to be changed from the European patterns that they have learned to regard as sacred. They would rather see any Africans who refuse to be westernized lost, than to risk changing the present forms to more adequately express Christian meanings within African cultures.”

In fact, evangelization must be adapted to every people, even if the message is universal. It means that evangelization should take the people's way of life seriously into account. Christianity adapted to the form of the local culture. And the valid elements of the people's way of life must replace the imported forms under which Christianity has been preached. According to Talla Takusi (1980:19):

This adaptation was to be made in all aspects of Church life, namely: catechesis, liturgy, art, theology and Church discipline. This demand for adaptation had been going on for many years but it only received a definite impetus from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Behind it lies the desire for real self-hood of the Church in the mission lands.

Unfortunately there was opposition to it especially from African Catholic bishops, priests and religious. According to P. Verdzekov (1977:2), "in 1974, the Synod of bishops issued a very strongly worded statement, declaring that the policy of adaptation of the Christian message that had been followed in Africa in recent years was then out-dated and therefore unacceptable."

The idea that Christianity must, in some sense, adapt to the culture in which it finds itself is not new. Roger Bowen (1996: 7) insists that the survival of Christianity has depended upon its ability to adapt to a new and hostile culture. A. Shorter (1973: 69) explains that adaptation is a misnomer, because it suggests that Christianity somehow adapts itself. In fact, it is not in itself, a culture. Christianity cannot adapt itself without betraying itself.

Since the aim of indigenization is to incarnate the Gospel message into the culture of the people, some questions come up: Can the Gospel be 'adapted' or 'accommodated' to local situations, or must it always be a foreign import? Can it be presented as fulfilling the local people's own hopes and dreams, or will that deform the Gospel by connecting it with religious ideas, which are anti-Christian (a process called syncretism)? These are of paramount importance because there exist many links between the Gospel and the culture. The duty of the spiritual leaders is to focus very strongly on these points.

2.3.3 Problems of tradition

The Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church (1962-1965) brought a renewal of the churches' life, especially indigenization. According to Takusi (1980: 18):

The demand that the Church's message and life be firmly rooted in the culture and life of every community no matter how small appears in many documents of the Second Vatican Council. It appears in many and diverse discourses and Apostolic Exhortations of His Holiness Pope Paul VI.

From the Second Vatican Council, the worship in many churches in Africa takes on many forms, which are culturally determined. Mbiti (1978: 277) suggests that African culture needs to be studied, analyzed, and utilized in the evolution of relevant spirituality and worship life of the Church.

Moreover a lot of western missionaries do not understand the thought patterns of the traditional religions of local people. They are steeped in western methods of thought; they cannot deal with the problems of their parishioners. It is for this reason that the Christian message is not understood, because it does not reflect the reality of the environment. Certain of these believers were disappointed to note that when they became Christians, they could not practice certain indigenous customs. Traditional wedding and funeral rites were replaced with ceremonies patterned after western customs. Polygamy, initiation rites, ancestor veneration, and other customs were condemned, often with little understanding of the social problems created by their elimination.

In the case of a polygamous man who later got converted to Christianity, he would have a dilemma since according to the Christian law; a man is permitted to marry only one wife. What then would he do with the rest of the wives if he were compelled to choose to live with only one? How to establish an indigenous Church that accepts polygamy as a culture? Because of some of these challenges, William Harris, who himself had more than one wife, did not condemn polygamy, as David B. Barrett (1968: 118) confirms that "Prophet Harris permitted polygamy, and was always accompanied in his travels across the Ivory Coast by three or four of his white-robed wives."

Do the important questions concerning the place that polygamists occupy in the communities remain without solution? Kraft (1978:307) brings some solutions as he asserts:

It must be clear, however, that once the Gospel begins to work within the people of a culture, his interaction with these people inevitably results in the transformation of at least certain of their customs. It is, in fact, likely that it will be changed, just as, through God's interaction with the Hebrews, polygamy died out in the Hebrew culture.

McGavran (1985:41) estimates therefore that the indigenous Church should have as a priority to work for the growth of the community. In the process of indigenization, evangelization will be more effective if it reflects the traditional realities of the environment. Thus, a good strategy of indigenization consists of adapting evangelization to the customs of the local people. He counsels to begin with a study relating to understanding the mentality of the indigenous people, because indigenization appears necessary for the Church.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown different meanings of indigenization. One aim of indigenization is to incarnate the Gospel message into the culture of the people. This means that the message and life of the Church are firmly rooted in the culture and life of every community. The actual conception of indigenization is the fruit of a long evolution characterized by the usage of different terms such as adaptation, inculturation, and contextualization, Africanisation.

Unfortunately, many churches in Africa do not yet live an inculturated African theology that is in relation to the ways of presenting and re-expressing the Gospel in forms and terms proper to a culture; many indigenous people do not want things to be changed from the missionaries' way which they have considered as sacred.

However, most of the African churches, especially the independent or 'indigenous' churches have grown up. Many of these churches were born and developed

independently of those churches founded by missions from outside the country (though they have often been influenced by them). They preach the Gospel within the melodies of African culture, through words of a thousand languages, through the vibrant tunes of ten thousand musical instruments, through the joyous rhythm of bodies and the solemn symbol of artists (J. Mbiti, 1978:275).

This process of preaching and understanding the Gospel presented by the indigenous churches is the practice indigenization. One day or another, if all churches understand well the sense of indigenization, they will decide to use in their liturgical celebrations both traditional and modern musical instruments. This choice generates for the Church an extraordinary rhythm of growth for the Church.

With regard to evangelization and communication with the environment, some churches and indigenous leaders revise the words used in their preaching in order to be understood by Christians. These words are not very familiar in the theological languages but they are simple expressions decorated by their own culture (such as proverbs, indigenous poetry and hymn). In other words, it involves using adaptation and contextualization.

Adapting Christianity to the culture and language of the environment was for the churches an element determining their growth. The ecclesiologist Jean Marie Tillard (1995: 46) insists also on the importance of considering the cultures and traditions that are 'fundamentals' in the Church. He supports the necessity of indigenization of the locale churches. So, it is important for the Church to adapt itself to the human context in which it is inserted.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PLANTING OF CHURCHES IN THE BETSILEO CONTEXT, THE REGION OF RAINISOALAMBO

3.1 The task of this chapter

This chapter shows the planting of churches in the Betsileo context, the region of Rainisoalambo. It relates to the general history of the churches in Madagascar. So it involves firstly giving the historical background of the churches in Madagascar, particularly the Protestant churches, as the topic of this study suggests. Then, it is better to talk about the traditional religion of Betsileo before the arrival of the Christian religion. Thereafter, I will explore the arrival of the Gospel and the foundation of churches in this region through the different missions and denominations such as the LMS, the NMS, and the Roman Catholic Church. The political context of Madagascar will be mentioned also in this chapter, because it relates to the awakening of Rainisoalambo.

3.2 The historical background of churches in Madagascar

From the outset, it is worth noting that it is not a matter of telling the full history of the churches in Madagascar, but just the important points that relate to the life of Rainisoalambo, the revival movements, and the Protestant churches in general. I will consider the history of churches in Madagascar during following two main periods:

- The arrival of the first missionaries until the end of the persecution (1818 – 1861)
- The spread of the Christian religion (1861- 1870)

3.2.1 The arrival of the first missionaries until the persecution (1818 –1861)

According to Vincent Belrose-Huygues (1992: 187), when Radama I (1810-1828) was the King of Madagascar, his policy was the expansion of his kingdom and the general

development of his people's life so that Madagascar and the people would be like modern Europe. This policy of Radama coincided with the missionary association project, whose intention was to evangelize abroad. This missionary association was founded in 1795 and later became the "London Missionary Society" or LMS. Gow (1979:5) confirms that since 1796, the LMS had contemplated the idea of a mission in Madagascar. Radama's priority was to imitate technologically advanced Europe. But he accepted the arrival of LMS missionaries on condition that they would also bring skilful artisans (Baur, 1994:396).

3.2.1.1 The first arrival of the missionaries (1818-1819)

The first missionaries were David Jones and Thomas Bevans, two Welsh divinity student volunteers⁹. After a brief stay in Mauritius, where they had commenced the study of Malagasy, Jones and Bevans, accompanied by their families, arrived in Toamasina, the first port of Madagascar, on August 18th, 1818. They stayed in Toamasina and started to teach the children.

Unfortunately, from the beginning, the missionaries were plagued by malaria, and little teaching work was attempted. This definitely failed when Jones's wife and child, and the Bevans family, died from malaria in Toamasina in February 1819. In July 1819, Jones returned to Mauritius to recover his health. He took advantage of his stay in Mauritius to learn more about the Malagasy language through the Malagasy books that he found there and through the relationship with the slaves from Madagascar (Brown, 1995: 135).

3.2.1.2 The return of the LMS and their strategies

Gow (1979:6) affirms that Rev. David Jones returned to Madagascar in 1820. He went directly to Antananarivo where the king Radama reigned. When Jones met Radama, he was soon asking for permission to open a school, a request that was granted immediately.

⁹ LMS: Madagascar, Box 1, File 1, "*Memorial to R. T. Farquhar*", 1 April 1813.

Radama was quite aware of the importance of learning, for as a boy he, himself, had asked his father for a tutor.

Jones used the privilege given by the king to work hard for the christianization of the country. His priority was education; evangelization followed when he gained the heart of the people. His strategy was evangelization based on education.

Brown (1995: 135) states that the first school was opened in the king's court with three pupils, young nephews of the king, including the likely heir to the throne, on the 8th December 1820. But the number increased very rapidly, because the king urged families to send their children to school. Teaching was in English, as there were no written documents in Malagasy, and Jones' knowledge of the language was still rudimentary. As a result, by 1823 many children were able to read and write Malagasy while few could write English. So, aware of the missionaries' seriousness in educating his people and that this could prove valuable, Radama requested more men from the London Missionary Society. According to the Radama's letter dated on 29th October 1820:¹⁰

...I was satisfied in all which your missionary Jones has done, so send us other missionaries, people of professions and talents who would make my people good workmen and good Christians.

The London Missionary Society took advantage of this opportunity to send more men to help Jones, such as Reverends David Griffiths, David Johns, and Joseph J. Freeman. They worked as teachers and pastors. The missionary artisans such as Canham, Chick, Baker, and Cameron taught the skills of carpentry, iron working, weaving, tanning, and wood work to the King's subjects (Sigmund Edland, 2002:56).

The missionaries were eager to expand and to begin employing their students as teachers and catechists, though little formal instruction in religion had been undertaken¹¹. But to convert the Malagasy to Christianity, they needed to hear God speaking to them in their own language. This would enable them to grasp the inner meanings of the Biblical message and understand its doctrines. All through the history of Africa, what produced

¹⁰ Free translation from Malagasy language of Radama's letter to the LMS Director.

¹¹ LMS: *Journal, Madagascar and Mauritius*: Journal of the Rev. David Griffiths, 4, n.d 1823.

the massive development of Christianity was the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, not westernization, as Bediako says during his lecture:

‘African Christianity is inconceivable without the Bible in the vernacular language of the Africans; the mother tongue is powerful. When the Bible is written in their own language, that’s the moment that Africans recapture Christianity. God speaks their language. Africans are now in touch with the root of Christianity.’¹²

The Malagasy students who had the ability to adapt to western education were employed by the missionaries to help them in the translation of the Bible¹³. Schools and Malagasy teachers increased little by little, the missionaries provided books and lesson sheets through the arrival of a printing press by which they could print the New Testament and some of the Old Testament translated in the vernacular language (Gow, 1979: 7).

The purpose of all these works was the propagation of the Good News and converting the Malagasy to Christianity. This was the LMS strategy: the conversion of King Radama could mean the conversion of the Malagasy. But they failed to convert him; he was strongly attached to the religion of his ancestors; even with adults, they had very little success. (Gow, 1979: 11). It was only in schools that they made considerable progress. Brown reports:

‘In the schools, they made considerable headway in implanting Christian doctrines in the minds of their pupils, by the use of religious texts for reading, writing, and hymns for singing’ (1978: 163).

It was even difficult to get a large number of Christians; Belrose (1992:212) nevertheless affirms that in 1822, the first Congregationalist Church was founded in Madagascar. This means that the missionaries had convinced many Malagasy to be Christians. The number of Christians increased, several received baptism, and the second Congregationalist Church was built in 1831. Moreover, some books from the Bible had been translated and printed in the Malagasy language, which helped to strengthen the faith of the Christians. It was the Protestant missionaries (LMS) who had taught the manual of writing the Malagasy language, and the Bible was the first printed Malagasy book.

¹² Bediako lecture on the 3rd March 2004, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

¹³ LMS Madagascar, “*Letter of Jones and Griffiths to LMS*”, 20 Nov.1823.

King Radama was the source of both spiritual and temporal development in Madagascar in the 19th century. He brought western civilization to the Malagasy people through the western education of Malagasy society. He even wanted to imitate European progress, as he was influenced by the missionaries and followed their will without conscience; he stood and kept his personality as the King of all Malagasy, both Christians and “pagans”. But in order to obtain whatever technology or skills the LMS had to offer, he was willing to tolerate the existence of Christianity. This is why the missionaries could found the Congregationalist Church, print and spread the Bible translated in the vernacular language. Only one denomination, the Congregationalist, existed in Madagascar from 1822 until 1861.

3.2.1.3 Ranavalona I and the persecution of Christianity

A dark cloud covered the world of Malagasy Christians from 1828 to 1861. This happened with the arrival of a traditionalist queen, Ranavalona I, on the throne, as Edland (2002: 57) states that when Radama died in 1828, his wife Ranavalona succeeded him, and she devoted many months to mourn the dead. In accordance with Ranavalona's decree, all schools and churches were closed during the period of mourning. The missionaries could not do anything except continue with the translation and printing of the Bible and other books. But after six months, all schools were re-opened and later, worship was re-started. Maybe because of the war with the French in Toamasina, Ranavalona got worried and urged the people to have a close relation with the English. For this reason, the missionaries could work more freely than in Radama's period for about three years. More people requested to be members of the Church. Belrose (1992:213) argues that the increasing of people who requested to be members of the Church was as a result of listening to the preaching, and the love of Christian songs. Baptism and Holy Communion was free, and consequently the Church made more progress.

Unfortunately, this progress did not last because Ranavalona changed. One cause of the change of the Queen was the conversion of many idol-worshippers to Christianity. They

preached everywhere about the equality of all people on the return of Christ. According to Françoise Raison (1991:133-135), Rainitsiandavana, who was an idol-worshipper, had come into contact with Christianity and became Christian. He returned to his home village to preach to his friends about Jesus and the millennium. He also began to preach on the subject of slavery and went so far as to declare that when Christ returns to earth, all slaves would be set free, and that humanity was descended from one source, Adam and Eve. The Queen asked him if he meant that even the Mozambicans and Malagasy people were from the same parents. His answer was affirmative. Consequently, Gow affirms:

The Queen was shocked to discover that during the millennium she would be equal in status to her Mozambique slaves and that she would be forced to co-exist with Radama I and all the other deceased monarchs buried in the royal residence (1979:18).

Since the Queen was very angry with Rainitsiandavana, she sentenced him to death immediately¹⁴. The Queen started to hate the Christian religion. She saw in Rainitsiandavana a very real danger because he was spreading ideas which were a threat to her sovereignty. His doctrine of the equality of all people, and his belief that all men, from Ranavalona to the Mozambique slaves, descended from the same line, was anathema to her (Raison, 1991: 135). Barrett notes this cruelty of Ranavalona and argues:

This first attempt to indigenize the faith was cruelly suppressed by Ranavalona I, who put the prophet and his followers to death in 1834 as the first martyrs in her persecution (1968:213).

Brown (1995: 153) emphasizes that on Sunday, the first March 1835, Ranavalona summoned the people in and around Antananarivo to a great *kabary* (speech) in which she forbade Christian practices and ordered a strict adherence to ancestral customs. She also ordered them to hand in all printed books to the authorities, especially the Bible. She realized already the tremendous power of the Bible and its impact on Christian believers. Christians were ordered to come forward and accuse themselves in front of the Queen in order to receive pardon, if not they were to endure the pain of death. Fortunately, the

¹⁴ According to Malagasy Academy's document entitled, "*Madagascar sous Ranavalona Ière (1828-1835)*", edited by Ayache, I, pp.349-51, Ranavalona ordered Rainitsiandavana and his flock of some 200 to be executed.

whole Bible was printed on 21st June of the same year, and the missionaries shared it freely and clandestinely with the Christians, in order to strengthen each other in their hiding place. A few days later, all missionaries were expelled and Christianity was absolutely forbidden¹⁵.

The persecution started and many Christians were killed, burnt, poisoned, enslaved, hurled from cliffs situated in various Antananarivo suburbs, and so forth. But other Christians ran away and spread in all regions of the country. Some of them could move overseas to places like Mauritius and England. The persecution started in 1835 after the Queen's speech and continued until 1861 when she died (Gow, 1979: 21).

One can analyze why Ranavalona persecuted the Christians, because she felt threatened by the growth of the Christian community. Moreover, she became alarmed over the actions of the European powers and confused about the European governments and the European missionaries because, to her, they were all one body. For Ranavalona, the teachings of the missionaries were persuasive and some of her subjects, including a number of her own court, had been willing to desert their traditional beliefs, and forsake her for the King of England, and Jesus Christ. According to Gow (1979:20), Ranavalona said,

...Jehovah had been the first king of the English, and Jesus Christ the second, and that the missionaries taught the people to fear Jehovah and obey Christ, which meant that the English intended to divert the loyalty of the Malagasy from their rightful sovereign to the kings of England.

For all these reasons, Ranavalona became very jealous of her loyalty and her realm. She wanted to restore the worship related to the traditional religion and the royal *sampy* (talismán). As a patriot, Ranavalona defended her country against the foreigners, including the missionaries. She protected her own culture, which was threatened by the western culture.

¹⁵ Letter of Ranavalona I on 26th February 1835 to inform all missionaries that Christianity is forbidden in the whole of Madagascar.

The missionaries had built a strong base of Christian faith before they left. When they were gone, Malagasy Christians assumed control of the Church during the persecution, and these indigenous leaders were capable of projecting a more appealing image of Christianity than the missionaries. The fact that these people clung to the new religion at a time when doing so could mean instant death, must have impressed a number of Malagasy people who were later drawn into the indigenous church. The harshness of the sporadic persecutions served to strengthen the faith of these early converts and made them all the more willing to continue on in the name of Christianity (Gow, 1979:21).

3.2.2 The spread of the Christian religion (1861-1870)

Haja Rajoelison et al (1992: 259) explain that after the death of Ranavalona I on 15th August 1861, her son Radama II (1861-1863) succeeded her. The new King started his monarchy with the promise of full religious freedom for the people. The Christians who were in jail or had become slaves were freed. Several Christians appeared from their hiding places. The indigenous leaders of churches felt that they needed help in order to lead the Church in its true and real growth. They wrote to the LMS to request again for missionaries. Edland (2002:61) adds that the King also wrote personally to the LMS and the Pope to request for missionaries¹⁶.

3.2.2.1 The arrival of the Roman Catholic mission in 1855

Rajoelison et al (1992:253) explain that in June 1855, Joseph Lambert, a French trader, and his secretary who used M. Hervier as a pseudonym, but was really Father Marc Finaz, arrived in Antananarivo. Surprisingly, Father Finaz met the prince Rakotondradama or Radama II, the future heir of the throne, who welcomed him in his house. Finaz asked the permission of the King to celebrate the first mass clandestinely. The King accepted and attended this first mass on the 8 July 1855. Influenced and

¹⁶ Radama's letter to Pope dated on 7th November 1861, and to LMS dated on 21st February 1862.

attracted by Finaz's gentleness and his ability to win an argument,¹⁷ Radama II allowed him to stay in Antananarivo. But it was still during the period of persecution and the Catholic Church was not yet established.

On 24 September 1861, Father Webber, a Catholic priest, arrived to help Finaz and built a small Catholic Church in Antananarivo, followed by the establishment of a boys' school by the Jesuits and a girls' school by the Sisters of Saint Joseph de Cluny. According to Rajoelison et al (1992:259), Radama allowed Father Webber to preach the religion freely and publicly. He also allowed the Protestants the same privilege.

Radama II had previously a close relationship with Lambert to plot the dismissal of Ranavalona when she was still alive, but it failed, as Brown explains:

A younger French trader and ship owner called Lambert became the confidant of Prince Rakoto (Radama II). The Prince asked him to take a letter to the Emperor Napoleon III, appealing to French protection and armed intervention to overthrow the queen's cruel government. He also signed with Lambert "a charter" to establish a French company in Madagascar with a monopoly to exploit mines, forests, and agricultures over a vast area (1995: 164).

This "Charter of Lambert" was one cause why France colonized Madagascar later.

3.2.2.2 The second return of the LMS in 1862

Rajoelison et al (1992: 261-3) point out that when Finaz and Webber were the Catholic leaders in this period of Radama II, the LMS sent again to Antananarivo the Reverend William Ellis on 16th June 1862, because he had been there before, in the beginning of the persecution. The majority of the Christians, especially those who were persecuted, were very happy because Ellis was one of the founders of the Protestant Congregationalist Church in Madagascar. Consequently, the Jesuits complained that when Ellis arrived, their work became difficult, the Protestants increased while the Catholics decreased.

¹⁷ Finaz spoke to Radama about all which touched civilization and the good manner of governing. Radama was convinced (Raison, 1991: 203).

Edland (2002:62) explains that the Christians had belonged for a long time to the martyr churches, and did not want to follow a new religion. Furthermore, stemming from the Franco-Malagasy war of 1883-5, the Malagasy hated all foreigners, especially Catholic missionaries who were mostly French. The conflict between the Protestants and the Catholics started.

After Ellis, other Protestant missionaries arrived, such as the Rev. Toy and W. Cousins with his wife, Doctor Davidson, and the printer Parret. The foundation of new churches, hospitals and schools started. Among the new churches, Ellis decided as a priority to build new churches using stones, as a monument for the martyrs at the place where they were executed (Rajoelison et al, 1992: 262).

3.2.2.3 The arrival of the Anglicans in 1864

Edland (2002:64) explains that the Union of Anglican mission, which is the fusion of the SPG and the CMS, arrived in Madagascar in 1864. The Anglican missionaries started their work in the east coast of Madagascar. Unfortunately, the people of the coast were not interested in the Christian religion, except for some governors from the high land who were interested, and even then, not in the Anglican but in the Congregational Church, as Gow (1979:56) asserts, "the Betsimisaraka, like the Sakalava, were not interested in the teachings of Christianity, nor were they attracted to a religion practiced by their conquerors."

The Anglicans knew that it was impossible to work in the region without having one Church in Antananarivo. The CMS was disappointed and returned to England, and left its work for the SPG. But nevertheless England sent a bishop, and a cathedral was founded in Antananarivo. The Anglican Church started its work again in the capital, but was still in the minority because the majority of people preferred the martyr churches or the Congregationalist Church.

3.2.2.4 The arrival of the Norwegian Missionary Society in 1866

The NMS brought the Lutheran mission to Madagascar. According to Rajoelison et al (1992:274), Engh and Nilsen, Lutheran pastors from Norway, arrived in Antananarivo in 1866. They stayed in the capital for one year to survey the land and to study the Malagasy language. In 1867, the bishop of the Norwegian mission in South Africa, Rev. Schreuder, came to Madagascar to visit Engh and Nilsen and to establish an agreement with the LMS concerning the region where they could work. On 2nd September 1867, the agreement was finalized that the Norwegians would work in the Vakinankaratra¹⁸ region and would have one Church in Antananarivo, while the LMS was still working in the capital and its surroundings.

In the year 1867, the Quakers mission, through the FFMA, arrived to help the LMS, especially in education, medical care, and nursing. But as the number of Christians increased, the Quakers became a mission like the LMS and founded the FFMA churches, which worked together with the LMS, but in the western part of Antananarivo (Edland, 2002: 63).

When Ranavalona II (1868-1883) became the Queen of Madagascar, she and the Prime Minister were converted to the Protestant religion and they requested to be baptized. As a testimony of their conversions, all royal- talismans were burnt and the Queen founded a royal Protestant Church in the Palace (Raison 1992:277). According to the invitation letter for the inauguration of the Palace Church dated on the 8 April 1880, and written by the Queen herself:

“I, Ranavalomanjaka, Queen of Madagascar built this Stone House of Prayer on 13 *Adimizana* (20 July), the year of Jesus Christ, 1869, as a House of Prayer, for praising and worshiping God, King of kings, Lord of lords, according to the Scripture, through Jesus Christ, the Lord who died for human sins, and was raised again to justify and to save those who believe in and love Him. Thus, no human can destroy this Stone House which I built for a house of Prayer, whoever is King in my country, forever and ever, unless whoever destroys it cannot reign in Madagascar, my country”.¹⁹

¹⁸ The southern part of the Antananarivo province.

¹⁹ Archive de la Republique Malgache: *The story of the LMS*, p.360 – pp/4: 8 April 1880.

When the people saw that the Queen and the Prime minister had converted to the Protestant faith, more of them rushed into the Protestant churches. Raison (1992:279) explains that more groups of people were baptized: in Ambohimanga district there were 300, 600, 900 per Sunday. In 1862, the LMS had founded 30 churches with 2000 members in the rural area. At the end of 1869, the number of churches founded was 468 with 153.008 members. And in 1880, there were 1.024 churches with 225.460 members. The number of preachers was 2.807 in 1875, and 4.811 in 1884.

The Congregationalist churches founded in Antananarivo were organized into several districts. The LMS trained some theologians who were sent to be preachers outside of Imerina after their study. The royal Church in the palace had participated in sending these preachers and gave them certificate in the name of the state, and paid their salaries. And for this reason the Jesuits and other Protestants referred to the Congregationalist Church as the state religion.

Thereafter, the Congregationalist Church increased and spread. A good organization was needed. According to Gow (1979:52),

The LMS organized the people and the churches in its areas into a four-tier system, composed of the Church at the Palace, the town churches, the suburban churches, and the country churches. The prevailing pattern was a fusion of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, though all of the churches were bound together by means of a Congregational union, the *Isan'Enimbolana*, the 'Six Monthly Meeting'. This body met every six months to discuss Church business and to make decisions on questions of discipline and procedure. All churches with the LMS and FFMA were a part of this union, which served to give the missionaries a form of tight control over all their members.

Moreover, Raison (1991:441-442) shows that Cameron sent a proposal by letter to the *Isan'Enimbolana*. This letter proposed to leave the mission for the natives in the hand of the natives. Cameron suggested building the "Home Missionary Agency" to manage this indigenous mission. Each Church would delegate a representative, and all missionaries would be represented, but the chairman would be a Malagasy. On 10th June 1875, it was the *Isan'Enimbolana* itself that was constituted as the "Home Missionary Society". Each

of the churches sent representatives who contributed to the work²⁰. The Prime Minister wanted to be treasurer of the “Home Missionary Society” and he subscribed on his part one thousand dollars per annum. The sending of preachers, evangelists, and pastors, including their salaries, was the financial responsibility of the “Home Missionary Society”.

In brief, the *Isan'Enimbolana* and the “Home Missionary Society” became one organization like the LMS; it seemed as if the first “Indigenous Missionary Society” in Madagascar was supported by the state, especially the Queen and the Prime Minister. So the collection of churches’ contributions became a state affair. The “Home Missionary Society” sent some indigenous evangelists to propagate the Gospel and churches to the entire island.

According to Raison (1991:443), the Prime Minister was the leader of the indigenous mission, and had supported it financially in the name of the Palace Church. The majority of funds for this indigenous mission came from the Palace Church. Protestant churches started to spread before 1870. The state participated more in the Protestant Church’s mission because, through the Palace Church, the state was involved financially in the life of churches. This is why the other missions such as the Roman Catholic, the Norwegian Lutheran Church and the Anglican Church considered the Protestant churches as a state religion.

3.3 The traditional religions of Betsileo

Most of the literature available does not directly deal with the traditional religions of Betsileo, but many ideas have been preserved in sayings, proverbs, and speeches, as the Betsileo, like most Malagasy people, are fond of proverbs and speeches. To trace the origin of the Betsileo religion is even more impossible. Reflecting on the origin of the Malagasy religion, all Malagasy people have traditionally accepted the existence of a

²⁰ Annual Report of the LMS, 1886, p.138.

Supreme God, known commonly as “*Zanahary*” (Creator) or “*Andriamanitra*” (Sweet, or Fragrant, Lord)²¹

3.3.1 The Betsileo believe in one Supreme God

The Betsileo distinguish themselves from their immediate neighbours, the Tanala to the east, the Bara to the south and the southwest, the Sakalava to the west and the northwest, and the Merina to the north. Throughout its history, the traditions of this tribe have encountered some changes from political, economical, and religious influence. However, some basic aspects of these traditions remain, such as the belief in one Supreme Being, the respect of the elders and the ancestors.

Henri M. Dubois carried out research and concluded that the Betsileo people have a strong belief in a Supreme God, distinct from their belief in the ancestors. He states:

...The Betsileo whom we interviewed on the authentic thought of the rural pagans, isolated from any outside influence, have certified to us that the idea of a Supreme God, distinct from the ancestors, transpired clearly in the rites and in the belief as well as in the morality always and everywhere in these people. In the prayers, the invocations of *saotra* (thanks), God and the ancestors can be confused in appearance but they are not so in the mind (Dubois: 1938:788).²²

For calling God, the Betsileo use the words *Andriamagnitse*, *Andriantompo*, and *Andrianagnahare*. P. A. Razafintsalama (1998:67) confirms that the Merina, the Vakinankaratra, and the Northern and the Southern Betsileo mostly use the first word, *Andriamagnitse*. This word is a combined word of *Andria* from the word *Andriana* that means “Prince”, and of *magnitse*, which means, “Perfumed”. It can be literally translated, as some writers have, to “the Perfumed Prince”. So, the Malagasy word *Andriamagnitse* is used primarily in reference to the Supreme God in Betsileo tradition. It is not used for the ancestors whom they sometimes also call *zagnahare*.

²¹ Madagascar: Traditional Beliefs and Religion, in <http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:QCA6d699nb0J:atheism.about.com/library/world/...2004,p.1>

²² According to my translation.

For the second and the third words, the traditional Betsileo mainly uses *Andriantompo* and *Andrianagnahare* that are either used together or separately in invocation. Razafintsalama gives an example of an invocation followed by his explanation: "Hear, O *Andriantompo*! Hear, O *Andrianagnahare*!" The word *Andriantompo* means the 'Lord Prince', and *Andrianagnahare* means the 'Creator Prince' (1998:29).

The Betsileo use these three words to call or to invoke God. The choice between the three words depends on the region or the area in which it is being used. But in brief, the Betsileo belief in one Supreme God, the Creator and Lord of life, is shown in the way they begin and end their prayers. For the Betsileo, this God also takes life away. He is then the source of life, which is ended by him as well. He is the Lord of everything and reigns over all things. Everything comes from him. He regulates the weather and pours out his blessings upon the world. When it rains, the Betsileo believe that God's blessing is pouring out abundantly. However, when it hails, they speak of God as stoning the earth. Thus God uses his own creation to bless and to punish human beings.

According to the traditional religion of the Betsileo, God is invisible, mighty, and holy; no one can criticize him. The only exception to this is that the Betsileo criticize God for creating crocodiles by saying, "*Zagnahare* created the crocodiles, not for beauty but only for their strong build" (Rainihifina, 1961:73). Additionally, even though God is invisible, the Betsileo believe that he sees everything happening in this world, and it does not matter how clever we are in trying to hide it. This is shown in the following Malagasy proverbs: "God looks from the high and sees what is hidden"; "Do not think of the silent valley, for it is God who is overhead"; "There is nothing unknown to God, but he determines to bend down (as if to see)"; and "The simple (or insane) people are not cheated because God is feared" (J. A Houlder 1929:5,6).

God always looks over what we are doing and judges us according to our deeds. Good things are believed to be God's blessings, and bad things are believed to be God's punishments. God is never partial in his judgment. He is always on the side of the

oppressed and the victimized, with those who feel powerless in any given situation, and with those who have no one to protect them, for example the orphans.

The Betsileo call upon God or invoke his name during any event happening in the family or in the community. He is called upon to bear witness to covenants between two or more individuals. He is also called upon during the planting of crops, during and after the harvest time, during any construction, and so forth. These invocations are done everywhere.

Even though the Betsileo believe in one Supreme God, they also call the spirits of the ancestors. According to Jørgen Ruud (1960:21),

The Betsileo believe in one Supreme Spirit and call upon the spirits of the dead as their mediator between them and God.

3.3.2 The Betsileo's belief in the spirits

When we speak about the spirits, it is the spirits of the dead. It means the relationship between the living and the dead in accordance with the Betsileo's belief. Conrad Phillip Kottak (1980:212) explains that in accordance with the Betsileo's belief, if one person died, at least two spirits leave the body. One goes to a mountaintop, or nowadays, to heaven or hell, and has no more to do with the living. The other stays nearby, wandering the hills, occasionally invading homes and dreams, and assembling with other such spirits in the tomb to receive offerings from the living.

The Malagasy people name this second spirit *fanahy*, *ambiroa*, *aloka*, *avelo*, *angatra*, *matoatoa*, *lolo*, and *raha*. But in the Betsileo tradition, the first four words seem to be used to designate the spirit of the living. All of these can be used for the spirit of the dead, depending on the situation. According to Razivelo (1994:33), apart from the eight words listed above, the Betsileo frequently use the word *fahasivy* for the spirits of the dead of common people, and *zagnahare* for spirits of nobleman. Kottak (1980:214) confirms:

The term *fahasivy* ("the ninth of the ninths") is used as a reference (not address) term for ancestors. It comes from the ninth row in seed divination, which identifies the ancestors as factors in the problem being diagnosed.

All Malagasy people believe, like the Africans, that when a person dies his life does not end there (Rainihifina, 1961:213-14). R. P. Rahajarizafy (1963:18) explains that one's body, the so-called "*eight bones*" will be resting in the family tomb, well wrapped in a big cloth while his/her spirit will continue to live on. This spirit will now have the capacity of being present almost anywhere at will. The Betsileo, and other tribes in Madagascar, even believe that the spirit of the dead "*fahasivy*" will go to dwell at Ambondrombe, a mountain on the southeastern edge of Betsileo country. According to Kottak (1980:220), the ancestral spirits on Ambondrombe presumably followed Betsileo customs, worshipping their ancestors, attending markets and ceremonies, just like the living.

However, before it becomes a *fahasivy* and can dwell in that mountain, a proper funeral rite must be held with a sacrifice of one or more cattle (depending on the wealth of the family). Razivelo (1994:44) talks about three different kinds of sacrifice, and explains each:

The first steer/cow killed is called *fanondro ainga*. It carries the symbol that the life of the person who died is not given up alone, but with the life of this animal.

The second sacrifice is called *vorom-bahiny*, which literally is "food for the guests who come".

The third sacrifice is called *fiahiana*, or *lofo* or *solo* meaning "replacement". This symbolizes the flesh of the dead that was to be eaten by the living but was replaced by the meat of the *lofo*.

If someone in the Betsileo region dies, one kills a steer or a cow in order that the spirit of the dead would never come back to the family, but would go away with the killed cow. Without a sacrifice, the spirit of the dead still remains in the family, and brings something bad such as fear or threat. The spirit communicates with the living through dreams or through one of the spirits listed above. In the Betsileo belief, the body of the dead should not be left to the earth, for they love their relatives and they must keep his/her body to themselves. It will now continue living in everyone who partakes of the meat of the *lofo*,

for they say that the person is now deep in their heart. It is difficult for the Betsileo not to be present at a relative's funeral, to eat the *lofo* meat.

The great common customs practiced by the Merina and Betsileo is the *famadihana*, or rewrapping ceremonies of the dead. A definite ceremonial season spans the Malagasy winter, from June through September. It is a ceremonial inauguration of a new tomb, involving transfer of mortal remains from old to new tombs, or in general, it is a ceremony of rewrapping the dead, as Brown (1978:11) affirms,

The well known Merina and Betsileo customs "the turning of the dead", *famadihana*, under which the bodies of the dead wrapped in burial shrouds are removed from the family tomb at intervals of years and displayed at a joyous family gathering before being wrapped in a new shroud and returned to the tomb, is not found outside the plateau area.

Kottak (1980: 212) confirms that due to the fear of *fahasivy* or spirits, the Betsileo people practice the *famadihana* and need someone to protect them. However, they must deal with the dark side of the force, the occult powers controlled by sorcerers and witches, people who mock the social order by using its most potent symbols in inappropriate contexts. According to J. H. Haile (1900:401),

The Betsileo cosmology recognizes no conditions and events that lack cause, and in a highly personality world structured by kinship and marriage, causes are often personalized. He also affirms that diviners, who examine and interpret patterns of seeds or beans as they fall in a grid like setting, reveal causes. Causes could be illness, sterility, diminishing prosperity, or other misfortune, including malicious use of occult powers by others, ancestral displeasure, infringement of taboos, spirit possession, loss of soul, and action by ghosts. With the diagnosis made, the diviner suggests a course of action, usually involving the sacrifice of an ox, designated to affect a cure, and exacts a fee for his labour.

Since diviners get a lot of money for the cure, many Betsileo are involved in diviner work. They do not remain as diviners, but improve their knowledge and skills and later become astrologers, because divination and astrology are also used to set dates and series of details connected to the performance of ceremonies. To protect the people against bad spirits and evil, the talismans used by traditional healers appear. Unfortunately, it drew many Betsileo to become idol-worshippers, because the protection is not only for people, but also for goods such as crops, cattle, the house, and so forth; and many taboos appear.

To sum up this traditional religion of Betsileo, I would say that the Betsileo believe in the continuation of life after death and have a relationship with God and the ancestors.

3.4 The arrival of the Christian religion in the Betsileo context

From the aforementioned, after the death of Ranavalona I, the Christian religion became free. When Ranavalona II and the Prime minister were converted to Protestantism, this denomination also became a state religion. Thus, the Christian religion arrived in Betsileo through four ways:

3.4.1 Through the officer of the armed forces

According to Rabehatonina (2000:13), the Merina Christians had lived in Christianity, and many officers of the armed forces were converted. When they were designated to work among the Betsileo, they took advantage of this to spread the Gospel and build new churches, as they were military. At the same time they spread the kingdom of the Queen and that of God. Raison (1991:410) explains that Rabodosoa, the wife of the first governor of Fianarantsoa (the capital of Betsileo) was converted in 1831 by Andriamanana, the secretary of the garrison. Baptism and Communion were celebrated regularly in the garrison after 1842 until the end of the Queen Ranavalona I (the persecutor), and the officer Andrianaivoravelona and his friend Ratovohery were the leaders of the congregation.

3.4.2 Through the persecution

Through the persecution of the Christians during Queen Ranavalona I's (1828-1861) rule, several Christians ran away from Imerina and spread to all regions of Madagascar. Thunem (1934:11,12) affirms that among the Christians who ran away during the persecution, some took refuge in Fianarantsoa. They brought Christianity and Christian lives towards the Betsileo. When the persecution ended, they built new churches and

people started to learn the Christian religion. According to Gustave Mondain, (1920: 269):

Not content with evangelizing Imerina alone, Merina Christian community began sending missionaries (indigenous) out into provinces. These early Christians also carried the Gospel into Betsileo. Government control was never as strong before 1861 in Betsileo as it was in Imerina, and consequently many Christians settled in or around Fianarantsoa. The local Merina Christians were active; they converted an unknown number of Betsileo and Merina officials and were able in 1859 to found a secret Church in the city. With the death of Ranavalona the Christian community came out in the open and churches were founded in rapid succession in 1863, 1864, and 1866. When the first LMS men arrived in 1869 to establish a 'Church' and to take control of affairs, there were already seventy-nine churches and sixty-three schools in Betsileo, all under the supervision of Merina pastors.

3.4.3 Through the migrants

When I say "migrants", it means the people who move from region to region, or province to province for work or other reasons. Some people from the Betsileo stayed in Antananarivo during the christianization, and had tasted the Christian religion. When they came back to their original region, they preached and urged the people to build churches. Raison (1991: 410-11) asserts that Rasoanjanahary, a noble Bara²³ woman brought into Antananarivo under Ranavalona I's rule, went home to Ambohimandroso and founded, with her friend Renisata, the first congregation with fourteen members. A slave of Betsileo origins, named Rasamoelina, who was converted in Antananarivo and followed his master as an officer there, helped her. Rainikotobe from Betsileo origins brought to Imerina by Radama I's military. He went home to Betsileo, accompanying his master Rainitsizehena. He was authorized to pray and to preach. He moved to many areas, preached and founded many churches. It was Christianization for the Betsileo by the Betsileo or an indigenous mission for the natives by the natives.

On the arrival of the missionaries, the indigenous Christians had already established several churches held by the Malagasy leaders because they were taking the initiative and conducting Church life on their own.

²³ Bara: tribe in the South part of the Betsileo.

3.4.4 Through the missionaries

According to Thunem (1934:12), Missionary M. Richardson from the LMS arrived in Fianarantsoa in 1870 to work there and in the surrounding areas. Razaka (2003:8) affirms that it was Richardson who founded the Church in Ambatoreny, the native village of Rainisoalambo, in which he was baptized and tried to taste the Christian religion. This Church served as a school apart from the Sunday service, and the pastor himself was the teacher.

The Roman Catholic Church arrived in 1871, one year after the LMS. Their work was not more effective than after the entrance of the French colonialist in 1896, because during the monarchy period, several Protestant churches from the LMS had been built everywhere. The majority of Christians, especially the Merina who worked in Betsileo, belonged to the Protestant Church, which occupied so many areas, especially in town.

In 1875, the Norwegian Mission through Arne F. Valen and Knut O. Lindø started working in Fianarantsoa. They had been appointed from the West of Madagascar to the Betsileo region, for reason of health. In 1877, Lindø had founded the station of Soatanàna while Valen had begun that of Fianarantsoa in 1878 (H. Hovland, 1995:9).

The history of the plantation of churches in the Betsileo, especially the Congregationalist Church from the LMS, and the Lutheran Church from the NMS, both are actually called "Protestant", played a big role in this research of the indigenization contributed by Rainisoalambo. The spiritual life of Rainisoalambo developed and ended in these two denominations.

3.5 Political context

The political context is not the full political history, which happened in Madagascar. It is just the political situation before the appearance of Rainisoalambo or the revival

movement. In the political context, two important points that brought suffering to the people are mentioned: the payment of tax and the pre-colonial context.

3.5.1 The payment of tax

The officers of the armed forces and the military sent by the authority of Merina, during the last monarchy, went village to village in the whole Betsileo area, to oblige all men over ten years old, except military personnel and slaves, to pay tax. According to Edland (2002:27-8), due to the first war between France and Madagascar in 1883-1885, France asked compensation from Madagascar and seized Diego-Suarez province, the northern part of the island, as Lambert's inheritance, in accordance with the "Charter of Lambert".

Unfortunately, the state income was too little to pay this compensation, and the state was obliged to collect more than the usual taxes. For anyone who did not have money for the tax, his possession was sold. Moreover there was a free contribution for social work, but in fact, some indirect obligations were used in order to encourage the people to participate. People became poor and did not have any freedom.

3.5.2 The pre-colonial context

Lupo Pietro (1992:300) explains that the great conference in Berlin in 1885 determined the division of Africa as colonies without consideration of the existence of the Africans states. This meeting allowed the "civilized" countries to colonize all African countries that were considered to be without owners.

Previously, Zanzibar was under the French protectorates and Madagascar under the English. But in 1890, France and England exchanged their protectorates through the "Convention of Zanzibar." This convention gave the French a free hand in Madagascar. When the Malagasy people heard of this convention, they started to hate the French. Many French traders were robbed and killed, and there was no security in Madagascar. France took advantage of this insecurity to justify its reason for the protectorate.

Edland (2002:32) affirms that, in October 1894 the French resident Le Myre de Vilers gave a limited ultimatum to the Malagasy: they must either accept the protectorate or refuse and war would soon come. The Malagasy never accepted to be a French protectorate, so the war started from the coast to the highland in December 1894.

The majority of the British missionaries had gone and the Merina dynasty started to collapse. In this difficult moment before the second war with France that would be ended by Madagascar becoming a French colony, just two months before the war, on 15th October 1894, Rainisoalambo appeared as a saviour for the Betsileo, and later for all Malagasy.

3.6 Conclusion

It is shown in this chapter the way that churches crossed, from the beginning until the appearance of Rainisoalambo. In the beginning, during the Radama I period, the missionaries profited from the thirst of the King to develop his country and the ignorance of the Malagasy people, to bring western Christianity into Madagascar. A great change happened in Madagascar, because it was the first time European missionaries brought both development to the country and christianization to the Malagasy people.

When Radama I died, his wife Ranavalona I succeeded him. Unlike her husband, Ranavalona I retained the traditional customs and religion. She forbade the Christian religion and expelled the missionaries, persecuted those who remained in Christianity, urged all people to return to their traditional religions, that is, the practice of all traditional customs.

After the death of this ruthless Queen, the Christian religion spread freely. The British missionaries returned. New denominations such as the Norwegian Lutheran, the Anglican, the Catholic, and the Quakers or Friends arrived in Madagascar. Each denomination had its own strategy to develop and spread its faith. But the most distinguished among them is the Congregationalist Church, founded by the LMS. The

Queen Ranavalona II was converted to Protestantism together with her husband the Prime Minister Rainilaiarivony and built a Congregationalist Church at the Palace. So, the other denominations considered Protestantism a state religion. Only the Congregationalist Church was called Protestant in this period.

Additionally, the missionaries built churches, especially the martyrs' memorial, trained the indigenous people in theology to be pastors or evangelists, created a "Home Missionary Society" to support the sending of indigenous missionaries to preach the Gospel to the indigenous people. The Malagasy had started to preach to the Malagasy, the Betsileo preached to their Betsileo friends. The preaching was in the vernacular languages, but the customs in the Church were still European (Gow, 1979:236).

In brief, the Church was built everywhere, but unfortunately it rejected many Malagasy cultures and traditional customs. For example, the issue of polygamy, Malagasy modes of singing, all forms of indigenous music were condemned and rejected. The majority of the hymns are in Malagasy languages but still with foreigners' tunes. According to Gow (1979:237):

The British model was the only one to which they could refer when they were faced with a problem or a situation. The only acceptable form of music and singing was the one they [the missionaries] had learned in Great Britain, so they forbade Malagasy forms of music and singing and replaced them with the sacred music of the Church of England and British Nonconformity.

The Betsileo had special religious hymns of indigenous type called *zafindraony*, but these were banned from worship services. The missionaries considered it as "pagan" types of songs, because during the *famadihana* there is a folklore and folk dance with folk music, which is very similar to the *zafindraony*. So the missionaries condemned both *zafindraony* and *famadihana*.

To sum up, Malagasy Protestant churches were still in the missionaries' control, especially financially. The indigenization of the Church, supervised by the European, left the Malagasy looking like beggars and created a psychological feeling of dependence upon the missionary societies for funds.

In assessing the impact of the London Missionary Society on Madagascar, it may be said that these missionaries were unconsciously devoted to spreading a western capitalist culture and consciously to preach a doctrine of submission to God and secular authority. They assumed, without hesitation, that western civilization was a good thing for the Malagasy, through the wish of Radama I (Gow, 1979:240).

Moreover, the greatest contribution made by LMS to the Malagasy was in the domain of education. Education played a big role in propagating Christianity. The mission schools produced countless clergymen, teachers, and civil servants who could read and write, before the French arrived and began creating a system of lay education (Gow, 1979:241). These were the realities in Protestant churches in Madagascar before the independence of the Church, and before the conversion of Rainisoalambo and his revival movement.

CHAPTER FOUR

RAINISOALAMBO AND THE CHURCH

4.1 The task of this chapter

Apart from the persecution of Christians under Queen Ranavalona I (1828-1861), which resulted in several martyrs, one relevant event that characterized the life, work of the mission and Protestant churches in Madagascar was the appearance of revivals now and then. The first and most outstanding of these revivals is that of Rainisoalambo.

Despite the persecution mentioned in the previous chapter, Merina sent indigenous missionaries to carry the Gospel into Betsileo and founded a secret Church in the city (Mondain, 1920:269). Thus, when the missionaries arrived in this region later, some established churches already existed in the Betsileo's areas. But the missionaries continued to build and expand new churches in their denominations. Knut. O. Lindø, a Norwegian missionary, founded the Lutheran Church of Soatanàna in 1877 (H. Hovland, 1995,9).

The revival of Rainisoalambo and the established Church arose from two different backgrounds. So, this chapter examines the relationship between Rainisoalambo and the established Church: were they antagonistic or helpful to each other? Before dealing with this relevant question, this chapter will first deal with Rainisoalambo's biography. But the most significant part of this chapter will be to show the collaboration between Rainisoalambo's revival and the established Church.

4.2 Rainisoalambo's biography

No writers mention Rainisoalambo's date of birth in their books. By reflecting on the date of his awakening and the date of his death, it is possible to establish his date of birth.

Thunem (1934: 21,42) states that on the 15th October 1894 (the date of his awakening), he was about fifty years old. And on the 30th June 1904 (the date of his death), he was about sixty years old. So, it is possible to calculate the date of his birth, or more precisely the year of his birth. These two dates affirm that Rainisoalambo was born in 1844.

Rainisoalambo's true name was Razaimbola, according to Radaniela²⁴(1905:81). His name means "the younger brother of the prince", because the king of Isandra²⁵ had confidence in Razaimbola's parents, who became the nurse of his children and keeper of the royal talisman. When Rainisoalambo was still a baby, his parents looked after him and the prince-baby. This prince, namely "Vola", was older than Rainisoalambo. In Malagasy "junior" translates to *zainy*. That is why Rainisoalambo was previously called Razaimbola, from *Zainivola*, or Vola's junior. Later, when he was married and had his first child, named "Soalambo", people called him Rainisoalambo, (meaning 'the father of Soalambo').

A. Rahamefy (1997: 236) states that, as a native of Ambatoreny, Rainisoalambo was part of the royal servants of Isandra, in charge of looking after and educating the princes, and attending to royal funerals. This status as royal servants excluded them from all alliances with free groups, guaranteed their faithfulness to the royalty and bestowed much power on them in term of the determination of dynastic succession. Rainisoalambo succeeded his father in acting as the keeper of the royal *sampy* (talisman) and being the diviner-counsellor, before becoming the main spokesman of the King. Eloquent in *kabary* – royal speech - through which the laws of the kingdom and judicial decisions were proclaimed – and proficient in science, divination and healing, he enjoyed great authority over the people, in all the areas that he went to while performing his duties for Isandra's prince, Rajoakarivony II. His duties allowed him to confront the Merina administration's representative, and according to Radaniela, his biographer: "He always defeated his opponents, even when he defended someone who was guilty" (1905:81).

²⁴ Radaniela is the biographer of Rainisoalambo, in *Mpamangy*, May- June, 1905

²⁵ Isandra: one monarchy in the Betsileo region.

When King Rajoakarivony died, in 1892, and was succeeded by his sister, noblewoman Ramavo, Rainisoalambo felt old and appointed his son to replace him. He moved to stay in his native village of Ambalavato-Ambatoreny.

4.3 Rainisoalambo and the revival

To define the revival based on a theological plan is a true challenge. The data that refers to it is rare, even though the concept of renewal is present in the Scripture. Otherwise, the revival is always perceived as an experience. Thus, historians and sociologists are more interesting than theologians, in this subject. It is easier to describe rather than to define something theologically.

A revival is considered as an exceptional spiritual phenomenon within a certain time and space. It is recognized, amongst other things, by the following characteristics: the decisive role of one person whom God has visited in a particular manner, by which God carries out a deep spiritual transformation in the community or in the given region; the conversion or repentance of a large number of people in this community through the ministry of this person; the will of this community to obey God and to submit to the Scripture's authority; the wish of this community to live in intimate communion with God and in fraternal communion between believers; the fear of God that seizes the community.

The accent carries on the extraordinary action of the Holy Spirit during a relatively long period. These necessary and sufficient characteristics of a revival serve as an indicative framework for the exploration of Rainisoalambo's revival.

4.3.1 Rainisoalambo's conversion (awakening)

In 1894, Rainisoalambo was deeply rooted in the traditional religion as idol-keeper, diviner, and traditional healer. As Rainisoalambo grew up with the princes at the noble

palace, he knew Christianity from the royal family, who belonged to the Protestant Church as the official religion. According to Raison (1991:840):

At the end of the 19th century, the Protestant became the official religion of the Merina government. After a short period, before the royal conversion in 1869, during which Christianity was secretly propagated by the banned people of Imerina who took refuge in the Betsileo region, the military administration brutally taught the benefits of the new religion and its superiority to the indigenous religion.

In 1884, Rainisoalambo accepted baptism in order to attain the status of catechist (or pastor) and to have access to the resources provided by the missionaries. This means that he adhered to the Protestant religion, particularly to the LMS. According to L. Jacquier-Dubourdieu (1996:605):

Trained in the theological institute of the LMS, in which the students were paid and did not perform chores; dressed in a European manner, disciplined, in constant relation with the palace, they represented in the eyes of the rural people the new face for "greatness", and the model of new sociability. After six months of training, Rainisoalambo was nominated as a pastor, responsible for his parish but not paid, a status less enviable than that of an evangelist. Disappointed, he continued his activity of diviner-healer and refused to submit to the order of teacher-evangelists, those who had done some regular study.

Rainisoalambo was disappointed because he did not obtain any money from the missionary. Moreover, the payments of the local tax oppressed him. An epidemic of disease, of unparalleled severity, visited the neighbourhood of Fianarantsoa and the surroundings, as J Pearse (1897: 32) confirms:

The ordinary Malagasy malarial fever had been known in the district of Isandra (Soatanàna) for many years previously, and from time to time, epidemics of smallpox had appeared.

Rainisoalambo fell ill. He was affected by the epidemics of smallpox and became incapable of working. In these miserable conditions, a divine intervention, when he was seriously sick, converted him physically as much as spirituality, because God did not only heal his sickness, but also called him to serve Him as a prophet, as Jacquier-Dubordieu (1996:606) argues:

Rainisoalambo's conversion responded only to the word which God addressed directly to him, during the revelation that he received at his own home, on the 15th October 1894. He lived for several years in conditions of extreme destitution; his dependants abandoned him, his rice fields were not cultivated, his pains were

immense and he had less than seven cows. He had a dream that night, that a messenger dressed in white ordered him to throw away his *ody* – these talismans that were at the same time his “protector” and as diviner – his identity, to invoke the power of God; this he did the next morning. He immediately felt a feeling of deliverance.

Rainisoalambo’s vision of God is summarized in two main actions: to preach and teach. Preaching as a ministry of deliverance includes prayers for healing and exorcising, while teaching includes literacy teaching and the communication of Christian values that believers discover through community reading and individual writing.

Rainisoalambo’s conversion (15th October 1894) occurred, just two months before the war with the French. The majority of the English left Madagascar and the churches seemed like orphans. Before the oppression by the payment of local tax, the smallpox epidemic, the raider’s attack, the confrontation with colonization, the persecution of the Jesuits and the *menalamba* nationalists towards the Protestants, God called Rainisoalambo for a special mission: to bring about a deep spiritual transformation in the community, through preaching and teaching. God used an indigenous person to continue the preaching of the gospel that the missionaries had preached to the indigenous people.

4.3.2 The development of the revival

Jacquier-Dubordieu (1996:606) states that when Rainisoalambo was healed, he summoned all his family, invited them to confess to God who had delivered him and sent him to deliver testimony of the ways of healing through prayer. This means that Rainisoalambo started with his close family the mission to which God had called him. As with a lot of Malagasy leaders of this time, Rainisoalambo was a master at the traditional speech forms. He had such ease in them that his preaching and teaching overwhelmed the whole village.

A major event that marked the beginning of his ministry was the conversion of twelve people in his village, who were deeply anchored in the traditional religions. According to Rabehatonina (2000: 27):

Sunday 9th June 1895 was a special day for Rainisoalambo and the twelve people. These people were convinced by Rainisoalambo's testimony, and they were healed after Rainisoalambo's laying on of the hand through the prayer. Thus, they had the habit of praying together at Rainisoalambo's house, every Sunday afternoon. Rainisoalambo led the devotions with prayer, the Scripture was read, and he prayed again to thank Jesus as he had healed the twelve people. All who attended these devotions, miserable and contrite, felt peace and happiness in their hearts because they lived again with inner strength. Suddenly, the earth and the house trembled, a voice was heard which said, 'I shall save my people, and you will preach repentance to them.'²⁶

Rainisoalambo felt the particular work of the Holy Spirit was to convince all people to offer their services to God, as 'disciples of the Lord.' To this day, this event is called "the Malagasy Pentecost" (Razaka, 2003:15). No doubt, there was a similarity to the Pentecost mentioned in Acts 2, as for the Holy Spirit's manifestation. Moreover, they started to live in intimate communion with God and in fraternal communion between believers. These people, as the first fruits of Rainisoalambo's ministry, would later be his close collaborators.

4.3.3 The emergence and sending out of *iraka* (apostles)

After Rainisoalambo's work and the revival started to be known in Isandra, several people wanted to join them. Rainisoalambo saw clearly, little by little, that his mission was not only for his family or his neighbours, but also for all mankind. Thus, the Rainisoalambo's strategy consisted of forming the *iraka* or apostles, and developing the community's life under the light of the Scripture in the village of Soatanàna. According to Dada Rajosoa²⁷, "in 1898, Rainisoalambo received an announcement from God about the emergence of *iraka*." The *iraka* were itinerant evangelists, sent throughout the island after receiving good training.

For their training, Rainisoalambo taught the *iraka* six themes, as Thunem (1934:28-9) confirms:

²⁶ According to my translation

²⁷ Interview on 8th January 2004, in Soatanàna - Fianarantsoa.

Rainisoalambo formed the *iraka* with six themes, namely repentance (Mat.4: 17), humility (Mat.18: 4), patience (Luk.21: 19), prayer (Luk.18), the new commandment (Joh.13: 34-35), and the holy brotherhood (Joh.17). All these teachings became natural behaviour for the *iraka* in their daily lives.

Rainisoalambo advised the *iraka* to preach simply and understandably, to heal and to exorcize, according to the Lord's wishes: "preach, heal, and exorcize" (Joh.14: 12; Mar.16: 17). From Rainisoalambo's good training, the *iraka*'s preaching attracted many people because it was clear and direct. Consequently, more pagans repented and rejected their fetishes, and became Christians. Those who had been discouraged because of the difficulties of life returned to faith and gained a new spiritual life. The people's thirst to gain knowledge and live through the word of God increased, and they joined churches close by. In brief, the revival spread little by little, from Rainisoalambo's native village spreading to the district, province, and so on.

However, the big problem that the Protestant Christians were faced with was the persecution of the Jesuits. Thunem (1934:29) notes that during the French-Malagasy war in 1895-1897, the Malagasy were defeated by the French and became a French colony. The Malagasy people were under French rule. The Catholics also persecuted the Protestants, as the English were the enemies of the French. According to Brown (1995:236):

While Gallieni²⁸ was engaged in suppressing the rebellion, some Jesuit missionaries, supported and often instigated by Malagasy Catholics seeking to strengthen their own position, seized the villages, telling the people that as Roman Catholicism was the French religion, all Malagasy who wished to be considered loyal to France must become Roman Catholic. In many places, and especially in Betsileo, they accused the pastors and leading Protestants of disloyalty and had them arrested and in some cases shot. They also seized many Protestant churches.

By contrast, while the Jesuits had told the people that as Roman Catholicism was the French religion, and all Malagasy who wished to be considered loyal to France must become Roman Catholic, J. Sibree (1924: 285) states that the LMS concluded an agreement with the leading French Protestant Mission, the Paris Missionary Society,

²⁸ Gallieni was a French Resident-General in Madagascar. His task was to crush the rebellion by the nationalists "*menalamba*" and then, to make Madagascar French.

handing over to the latter control of all LMS elementary schools. At the end of 1897, the LMS agreed to hand over to the Paris Society two large churches in the capital and 500 village congregations. But this still left the LMS with 700 congregations to supervise, including the Martyr Memorial Churches.

Sibree's explanation means that all the French were not Catholic, as claimed by the Jesuits, but that there were some French people who adhered to Protestantism. For example: the French Resident in Madagascar before Galliéni, called Laroche, was a Protestant, and some French Protestant missionaries arrived with a view to working with, rather than replacing the British, with his authorization (Brown, 1995:235).

The sending of the first *iraka*, in March 1899 coincided with the establishment of a new political order in Madagascar. The work that was expected of them would not be easy. Subsequent to their consecrations and benedictions in the presence of the missionaries and pastors, Rainisoalambo recommended to them:

You who are uneducated will preach to the teachers, to the pastors or presbyters, to the evangelists; you will advise the children and the adults, the fool and the wise; those who you forgive will forgive, and sickness will disappear. Do not be like the existing preachers: they preach but do not heal nor exorcise, do all of these (Thunem, 1934:29).²⁹

For Rainisoalambo, healing and exorcism were inseparable from evangelisation, as Hans Burki (1978:299) confirms:

To heal the sick is an essential aspect and action of Christ's redemptive power, because sickness is related to the influence of power structures. Exorcism has always been part of the ministry of the Church and is very much related to 'making disciples'.

The *iraka* went from village to village, town to town, and everywhere on the island, preaching the new commandment, repentance, and the love of God; praying for the sick and driving away demons; laying on of hands, and healing in the name of Jesus Christ. According to Barrett (1968:214):

The movement extended rapidly across the island through the widespread network of *iraka* (apostles), who were largely uninstructed itinerant evangelists noted for

²⁹ According to my translation

preaching brotherly love who were chiefly responsible for the strong churches later planted around the island's coasts.

The work of *iraka* attracted several people due to social problems such as illness, poverty, etc., spiritual problems, and the new political situation in Madagascar. Several people considered the existence of the revival movement as a means of compensation for gaining independence and for providing opposition against the colonial authority. But the *iraka*, aware of their mission, crossed the whole country, not only to preach, but also to build new churches. The churches built were entrusted to the mission, which worked in this region. E. Escande (1926:64-5) is convinced that because of the work of the *iraka*, the number of churches in Toamasina district increased during the World War I.

Example of Toamasina district, in the F.P.M (French Protestant Mission), according to Escande (1926:65).

| Year | Number of churches | Founded by |
|------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1907 | 13 | F.P.M |
| 1915 | 14 | F.P.M |
| 1922 | 74 | <i>Iraka</i> from Soatanana |
| 1924 | 113 | <i>Iraka</i> and F.P.M |
| 1925 | 124 | <i>Iraka</i> and F.P.M |

Churches developed, flourished, and strengthened financially due to the revival. Apart from evangelisation, Rainisoalambo's aim was that the Church would be independent in everything, particularly finance. His target was that the Church would be "self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting" (Tippet, 1979:64). Both the Church and country had the thirst for independence, but the Rainisoalambo's domain was still in the Church.

Rainisoalambo did not only send the *iraka*, but also went to many villages and towns to preach the gospel. The first town he visited was Fianarantsoa in 1899. He preached at the

Norwegian Church (at present Lutheran) in Masombahoaka. According to Danielson Rajosefa (1958:45-46):

At the FLM [Malagasy Lutheran Church] of Masombahoaka, Rainisoalambo showed his first miracle in Fianarantsoa. When he concluded his preaching, one paralysed person, convinced by his sermon, was brought before him. His name was Rainitalata. Rainisoalambo said to him: "We do not have any gold or silver, but in the name of Jesus, I command all demons and evil spirits, I command you in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, demon, go out from this person, and go to the desert and desolate land." Rainitalata trembled and the demon went out. He stood and could walk.

People were surprised, some were happy; others were jealous and went to inform the authorities. Moreover, the number of people who attended this worship was very high, as others left and others took their place. Escande (1926:85,86) explains that in Thunem's time, as the missionary at Soatanàna, Rainisoalambo went to preach in several areas and regions. He arrived at Vakinankaratra and visited Antananarivo for a few days. He preached, taught and empowered people whom he visited, and urged those who were convinced to come to the ministers or priests close by to be baptized.

4.3.4 The emergence of *mpiandry* (shepherds)

As a result of the *iraka*'s work, new converts to Christianity appeared in several areas of Madagascar. Rainisoalambo thought that they needed someone to look after them, so, as a good organizer, he created the *mpiandry* or shepherds, who would look after the new converts. Peri Rasolondraibe (1989:347) explains that the *mpiandry* were in charge of nurturing the new converts. Thunem (1934:32) confirms that for each village where the *iraka* visited and which had new converts, Rainisoalambo and the *iraka* appointed someone who had already been trained to look after them in order to give them courage, teaching, and comfort. The person who looked after the new converts was called *mpiandry*. Both *iraka* and *mpiandry* were preacher-healers, because for the Malagasy, the duty of revival was preaching, healing, and exorcising. All of them worked together.

In addition, Rainisoalambo founded a place in which one looks after dysfunctional people, practices the healing ministry permanently, and realizes the pastoral approach. This place was called *toby* (camp). According to Rasolondraibe (1989:349):

A *toby* is a camp; a village set apart, where healing is the preoccupation of all inhabitants. But it is only a camp; it aims at helping dysfunctional people resume normal life in society. *Tobys* are organized, run, and financed by shepherds themselves, while remaining under the supervision of the Church.

The shepherd ministry is an indigenous movement, which has grown within the Protestant churches in Madagascar and has strengthened both its outreach and pastoral ministry.

4.3.5 Problems of evangelisation during Rainisoalambo's time

Rainisoalambo's revival coincided with colonisation. The work of the *iraka* spread in all regions of Madagascar, even though the act of gathering crowds was forbidden, according to colonial law. The *iraka*'s work was not easy, because they often met prohibition and opposition from the French government. As colonialists, the French government was afraid of meetings or organizations involving Malagasy people. Frequently, the number of people who came to hear the preaching of the *iraka* was more than a thousand. The police arrived, arrested the preachers and dispersed the crowd. According to Edland (2002:138):

It happened when the *iraka* visited Vakinankaratra for the first time. The arrival of the *iraka* at Manandona attracted many people. The *iraka* did not ask for authorization for the public meeting; so the Governor of Antsirabe sent the police to arrest the preachers. Interested by the sermons, the police stayed there to hear the next preaching. The Governor sent other police to arrest the *iraka*. That morning they were sent to the administrator in Betafo. They had to pay fines because they had broken the law (meeting without authorization), and sent home.

This problem of arrest happened wherever the *iraka* went to preach, but the authorities did not dare to keep them in prison because it might provoke a rebellion. Furthermore, the authorities knew that it was a Christian meeting, and not a rebellion. So after they arrested the *iraka*, they sent them home. But the *iraka* still continued to preach all over

the island and helped the missionaries to build new churches. The fire of the revival flared up the whole region in two decades.

From a theological point of view, Rainisoalambo succeeded in “inculturation”. Through preaching and teaching, he knew that he had to root the Gospel in the Malagasy culture without compromising the universal message of God. In this sense, the doctrine taught in Soatanàna essentially remained the Protestant, but the spirituality was Malagasy. This Malagasy spirituality appeared in the practice of exorcism, through the hymns composed and written by Malagasy, and in the Christian ethic with local colouring. From a general perspective of Rainisoalambo and the concept of revival, one can affirm that the Rainisoalambo’s revival matches the characteristics of revival mentioned above.

4.4 The collaboration between Rainisoalambo and the Church

It has been said that Christianity was not something new for Rainisoalambo. He knew of it before his conversion because he stayed with the nobility who belonged to Protestantism, as the official religion of this time. Furthermore, Razaka (2003:11) mentions that he had a habit of following the nobility to Church and had heard the sermons many times. Furthermore, he had been trained by the LMS institute to be a pastor. Thus, both the Church and ministry were well known by Rainisoalambo. At this point, this study will deal with the relationship between Rainisoalambo and the Church.

4.4.1 The missionaries’ contribution

Even though the LMS had built a Church at Ambalavato-Ambatoreny,³⁰ close to Rainisoalambo’s house (Thunem et al, 2001:13), they left this region for the Norwegian mission, according to the agreement in 1873 between the two missions (LMS and NMS) concerning the division of the fieldwork (Edland 2002:73). So, even though Rainisoalambo had followed training at the LMS, his work remained with the NMS or the Lutheran Church.

³⁰ Rainisoalambo’s native village.

The first step of the collaboration was from the Norwegian missionary, Theodor Olsen. According to the testimony of Theodor Olsen, mentioned by Thunem et al (2001:17):

A movement that makes people happy appeared on the other side west of the missionary's station. At the end of October 1895, I knew that there were some adult pagans; about twenty or thirty asked for baptism. Apart from attending Church every Sunday, they also asked the teacher of Ambatoreny to teach them every Monday and Thursday, and to preach. They learned and taught each other reading or catechism, twice a week. When I visited them, one Monday, they were twenty or forty. They were very attentive when I preached the love of God to them. I therefore asked who the leader was, the person who was responsible for their presence in this place. (This person whom Olsen asked about might be Rainisoalambo). One answered: "we heard the preaching that calls us towards Jesus, that is why we are present here." I was convicted that this movement was a gift from God.

This explains that the first person influenced and attracted by this revival was the missionary, Theodor Olsen. Even though Rainisoalambo and his followers practiced indigenous worship that was different from the religion brought by missionaries, Theodor Olsen had no doubt, and he accepted Rainisoalambo's revival as being from God. The relationship between the revival and the Church started through this first step of Theodor Olsen's.

In addition, as the events, which happened in Ambatoreny, were first described, one can deduce that the missionaries expected some particular interest from this revival movement. As the aim of missionaries was expansion and conquest for the kingdom of God, maybe the dream of the mission would be realized by the presence of these voluntary collaborators amongst the indigenous people (Hovland, 1995:21)

Since the revival movement was neither an official organization nor a Church, it was easy for the French government to dissolve it. Thus, the Norwegian mission, through the missionary Theodor Olsen, was convinced that this revival needed some protection from the mission. It was not written but it was possible for the missionary, Theodor Olsen, during his visit to the revival movement at Ambatoreny, to convince Rainisoalambo and his followers to move close to the mission in Soatanàna, as Jacquier-Dubourdieu (1996:607) states: "then doubtless, under the constraint of colonial administration, that

the disciples joined to the proximal missionaries of Soatanàna in 1901³¹; as on this date, Rainisoalambo and his followers moved to Soatanàna, close to the missionary. Rainisoalambo and his family stayed in the house built by the missionaries.

4.4.2 Rainisoalambo's participation

Since the *iraka* and their aims were well known by the missionaries and the Church, the organization of the revival movement still remained Rainisoalambo's duty: he, alone, trained the *iraka*, then consecrated and sent them out, without the participation of missionaries and pastors. According to Dada Rajosoa³²:

“From the time of the emergence of the *iraka*, until the independence of the Church (under the indigenous administration), no missionaries and pastors consecrated any *iraka*. It was particularly Rainisoalambo's duty. He respected also the place of the pastors or ministers. He did not take part in sacraments like baptism and Holy Communion; he did not interfere with the missionaries' and pastors' duty, as he knew the tasks of each.”³³

Moreover, a more important aspect of Rainisoalambo's collaboration with the Church was the consideration of the missionary's presence among the disciples of the Lord. Rainisoalambo and his followers had confidence in the missionary of Soatanàna whom they appointed as the treasurer of the revival movement (Thunem, 1934:51).

I have said that the *iraka* went to many regions of the island to preach and build new churches. The churches established with the new converts were entrusted to the missionaries or pastors who existed in that region. This relationship between the *iraka* and the Church's leaders solidified the collaboration between the revival and the Church. Razaka (2003:20) emphasizes that the Lutheran and the Reformed Church accepted this collaboration with the *iraka* from Soatanàna.

The revival movement made progress, the number of people who wanted to be *iraka* and *mpiandry* increased, the number of people who lived in Soatanàna grew. The Church was

³¹ According to my translation

³² Interview on 8th January 2004, in Soatanàna, Fianarantsoa.

³³ According to my translation

not big enough for the Christians. Thus, the Norwegian mission, the Christians, and the revival movement decided to build a big Church. Thunem et al (2001:41) explain that the mission, the Christians of the old Church, and the revival, decided together to construct a new Church that they called "District's cathedral and monument of the revival." The work started in 1932 and was inaugurated in 1939 with this name. The existence of this Church proves the collaboration between the Church and the revival.

The state took part in reinforcing the collaboration between the Church and the revival. In 1907, the revival asked the state to allow them to be an independent organization; this request was rejected in the same year. The state considered the revival to be under the protection of the Norwegian mission who led the Lutheran Church. Thus, only through the Norwegian mission could the revival have religious public meetings, because it was said that the Church was no longer big enough (Thunem et al, 2001:35). The Malagasy situation was still under the French colonist government, and this power did not allow the building of an association or organization, because the state confused such with nationalistic rebellion.

In addition, the revival was an instrument that solidified the collaboration between the two Protestant churches in Madagascar: the Reformed (FJKM) and the Lutheran (FLM). According to J. W. Rabemanahaka (1994:100-1):

The FJKM was a fusion of three denominations: LMS, FFMA, FPM, which became one denomination named "Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar" in 1968. Likewise, the FLM was a fusion of three denominations: NMS, LBM, and ELC, which became one denomination named "Malagasy Lutheran Church" in 1950.

The *iraka* worked through the two denominations. If they had new converts in the FJKM's areas, they entrusted them to the FJKM; if they had new converts in the FLM's areas, they entrusted them to the FLM. Both FJKM and FLM met in revival meetings every year. Roger Andriatsiratahina³⁴ affirms that the revival was made by God to unite Protestant churches in Madagascar to this day, and the constitution of the revival

³⁴ Interview on 12 December 2003, in Antananarivo.

movement was agreed by the Federation of the Protestant churches in Madagascar (FFPM). The revival has its meeting annually on the 17th September in Soatanàna.

Thunem et al (2001:42-4) explain that on 17 September 1936, a committee of the revival was created. This committee wrote a letter to the regional revival to explain to them the aim and status of the revival. Verse six of this status was:

The disciples of the Lord or the revival are neither a sect nor a new denomination; they do not have any particular Church, but belong to the established denomination which exists in the region where they live. Thus, they do not baptize, but entrust the new converts to the ministers or missionaries close by in order to be baptized or to follow a confirmation class.

This verse emphasizes the full integration of the revival in the established Church. Their works complete each other, because without the revival, some churches neglect some of their duties such as the healing ministry through exorcism. Without the established Church, maybe the revival would have become a new denomination.

To summarize Rainisoalambo's collaboration with the Church, we revisit the main problem posed at the beginning of this chapter, namely "were the Church and Rainisoalambo antagonistic or helpful to each other?" All the proof stresses that both were helpful to each other. According to Barrett (1968:214):

At Ambatorenny near the Betsileo capital of Fianarantsoa, an LMS catechist named Rainisoalambo received a vision commissioning him as a prophet, and soon gathered a large body of followers known as the *Mpianatry ny Tompo* (Disciples of the Lord), later called the *Fifohazana* (Revivalists). Before long the prophet and his disciples attached themselves to the Lutheran at Soatanàna mission and made it their centre.

Furthermore, the revival played a relevant role in the Malagasy Protestant churches. In the beginning, the Malagasy considered Christianity to be a culture brought by the missionaries. But after the appearance of the revival, they felt that Christianity was made for them. The preaching of the *iraka* impacted on their daily lives. People understood the *iraka's* sermons better than those of the missionaries, especially the pagans who wanted to be Christians. Edland (2000:139) states that the sermons of the *iraka* were closer to Malagasy thinking than those of the missionaries. Consequently, the revival changed and

improved the life of Protestant churches. A few people have noted that without the arrival of the revival, churches would not have become really Malagasy.

There were two reasons for the revival remaining in the Church. First, the negative reason was that the French administration prohibited the building of all associations and organisations that were proposed by the Malagasy. In 1907, the revival made an attempt to be an independent organisation, but the state rejected its request. Thus, colonial power became an instrument to link the revival and the Church.

The positive reason for the revival still remaining in the Church was that the Church took it [the revival] into consideration. This means that the revival was well understood by the Church. In the beginning, there was some doubt about the *iraka* who insisted on healing and driving away demons through prayer and the laying on of hands. But in a short space of time, their acts of evangelisation all over the island brought about a good result; missionaries and pastors were convinced and accepted the *iraka* and the revival as an instrument of God to help the Church in propagating the Gospel. Several churches, regional synods, and districts asked the *iraka* to visit them because of their preaching. Several members of churches adhered to the revival, and became consecrated as *mpiandry* or *iraka* after their training.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with Rainisoalambo and his collaboration with the established Church. Rainisoalambo, alias Razaimbola, an eloquent public speaker, holding a high position in the nobility of Isandra, had already had some contacts with Christianity, but was not fully and deeply converted until after a fearful attack of smallpox, which almost killed him. In 1894, he was miraculously healed after invoking God and throwing away his all fetishes, Rainisoalambo founded and led the revival movement, at first, in Ambatoreny, but in 1901, he moved to Soatanàna to stay close of the Norwegian mission. When the revival was still in Ambatoreny, Rainisoalambo had already sent the *iraka* to preach in many regions on the island.

The collaboration between Rainisoalambo and the Church is marked by the followings: Rainisoalambo residing so close to the missionaries, was a sign of the collaboration between the revival and the Church. The new churches established by the *iraka* with the new converts were entrusted to the missionaries or pastors who existed in that region. The Malagasy Protestant churches, both the Reformed and Lutheran accepted and required the collaboration with the *iraka* sent by Rainisoalambo in the propagation of the Gospel. In this case, Rainisoalambo's revival also became an instrument that solidified the collaboration between these two denominations. The revival became the Church's instrument to propagate the Gospel and was under the protection of the Church and the missionaries during the constraint of colonial administration.

The revival brought by Rainisoalambo still remains in the Malagasy Protestant churches to this day and continues to spread to other denominations, such as Anglican and Catholic churches. In brief, the revival brought by Rainisoalambo played the role of ecumenist because it unified the Protestant, Catholic and Anglican churches.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONTRIBUTION OF RAINISOALAMBO TO THE INDIGENIZATION OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN MADAGASCAR

5.1 The task of this chapter

As explained in chapter three, the missionaries arrived in Madagascar in the 19th century with western Christianity wrapped up within their own culture. They assumed, without hesitation, that western civilization was a good thing for the Malagasy. The Malagasy traditional religion was considered as idolatry, uncivilized, and barbaric (Baur 1994:430).

In the beginning, Malagasy Christians confused European civilization and Christianity. But missionaries taught the Malagasy their culture before the Gospel. When the Malagasy were converted to Christianity, they received the Gospel mixed with western culture. For example: European hymns were translated into the Malagasy language, and Malagasy Christians wore European clothing as a sign of worthiness, as Gow (1979: 241) states:

Missionaries promptly set out to transform the society and began to emphasize European clothing, food and building styles, as well as cleanliness, Christian morality, hard work, western individualism, and thrift. A petty bourgeoisie sprang up among the more affluent Church members.

Thus, several Malagasy followed Christianity in the exterior forms as civilization, but they did not understand it very well, even though missionaries used the vernacular language. Even Rainisoalambo, before his conversion, followed Christianity only for money and equality with the European missionaries. But when he was converted, he came to know the importance of the Christian religion. This means that he followed it deep in his heart; he knew how to distinguish between the Christian religion and foreign civilization, and also how to use his own culture to propagate the Gospel. In other words,

he knew to indigenize the Malagasy Christian religion, especially in the Protestant churches.

This chapter is the core part of this thesis: the contribution of Rainisoalambo to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar. This chapter aims to answer the following questions:

1. How did Rainisoalambo express Christianity according to Malagasy thought patterns?
2. How did he propagate the Gospel so that Malagasy people would grasp it in the context of their own culture?

The answer to these questions is, the indigenization brought about by Rainisoalambo, which helped the people of God to express their faith in Malagasy within their own context.

5.2 The indigenization brought about by Rainisoalambo

There is indigenization when the Church feels the necessity of adapting the Gospel to the local cultures. Thus, the contribution of Rainisoalambo to the indigenization of the Malagasy Protestant churches is shown through the following points:

5.2.1 Preaching

The word “preaching”³⁵ has two meanings: to tell the message (*kerygma*) of God in the service, and to teach the Bible or catechism (*didaché*). Preaching has two aspects:

The content: that is to say, that God wants to communicate with human beings. In this sense, the content of preaching is said by the believers to be invariable, and therefore universal, valid for all people and all cultures. The Church has kept the essentials of preaching in creeds and forms (the Symbol of the Apostles, the Confession of faith of Nicene and Constantinople...).

³⁵ In “*The Interpreter’s Bible*” (1979: 4), Volume VII, Abingdon- Nashville.

The form: that is to say, the manner in which the message of God is told to people (the mode of reasoning, the logic, the examples to illustrate the message) is variable. For the invariability of the message to be understood through the preaching, it needs the indigenization of the form or container. At this level, it needs to take the culture into consideration.

Most of the literature available does not publish the preaching of Rainisoalambo. No writers mention his sermons, but we can explore his preaching through the interview³⁶, which was conducted before the writing of this thesis, and also through Rainisoalambo's teaching. According to Ralaimavo Seraphin³⁷:

When Rainisoalambo preached, all people felt that his preaching was different from that of the missionaries, because his preaching suited the thirst of the Malagasy; it was more direct than the preaching of the missionaries. The missionaries had not lived the Malagasy pagans' life, while Rainisoalambo had lived it. For example, the missionaries did not know why the Malagasy retained talismans? Rainisoalambo knew the reason why they kept them. And when they threw them away, what would they replace them with? The answer: Christianity. It explained why several Malagasy awoke through the preaching of Rainisoalambo; it was suitable for the circumstances of their lives. They understood it very well, and it did not uproot their cultures, but rooted them to their cultures and communicated Christianity.

Additionally, it has been said that Rainisoalambo was eloquent in public speech and always convinced his listeners. Because of his eloquence and ability to convince, he also became a defense counsellor³⁸. He used the Malagasy speech method (using the proverbs and pictures that the indigenous people easily understood) to preach; a Malagasy speech mode still in use that always uses several proverbs, is a part of the indigenous culture, which all Malagasy practice in marriage, in the acknowledgment of the funeral, and in all public meetings, as Houlder (1960: III- IV) confirms:

The Malagasy are partial to proverbs. These vigorous popular expressions of the universal wisdom are constantly used to emphasize the line of morals or to

³⁶ I conducted an interview in Antananarivo and Soatanàna, concerning my topic, during December 2003 and January 2004.

³⁷ Interview with Ralaimavo A. Seraphin on 20 January 2004, in Antananarivo. Ralaimavo is a Lutheran minister, historian, and descendant of Rainisoalambo's *Iraka*.

³⁸ In *Mpamangy*, May-June 1905, p.81.

decorate history. Nothing makes better sense to an indigenous audience than a proverb advisedly quoted. One knows one's people by their proverbs.

Also, the Malagasy rhetoric helped Rainisoalambo to communicate the thoughts of God to people. It is noted that the oral traditions were well developed at this time, particularly in Betsileo.

Preaching is not only meant to communicate the message of God, but also involves teaching (Bible or catechism). In this regard, Rainisoalambo's teaching was an important part of his preaching.

When Rainisoalambo had converted his first twelve disciples, they prayed together every Sunday afternoon at Rainisoalambo's house and studied the Bible. Before closing, on the special day of the 9th June 1895, called "the Malagasy Pentecost" (Razaka, 2003:15), they built seven commitments³⁹ for their daily living.

1. Learning to read and to write in order to read the Bible.
2. Learning to count and to calculate (to read figures) in order to look for verses in the Bible.
3. Women must correctly comb their hair, and men must cut theirs. Thus, they will present a good image of Christians.
4. Regularly cleaning the house so that it may be worthy of being a house of prayer; also cleaning the yard and the garden, building a kitchen and separating the animals' house (henhouse, etc.) from the Christians' house.⁴⁰
5. Growing vegetables, rice, and planting fruit trees in order to get more food. There must always be enough food at home.
6. Starting any task and activity with a prayer in order to receive God's blessings.
7. When there is a death among Christians, wrapping the dead in a clean sheet (Traditionally the dead were wrapped with expensive *lambarena*, and the family killed many cows as *lofo*; these normally entailed significant expense). The dead

³⁹ "*Fanazavana momba ny Fifohazana Ambatoreny-Soatanàna*" (Explanation about revival Ambatoreny-Soatanàna) – Leaflet 2004, Trano Printy Md Paoly, Fianarantsoa, p.10.

⁴⁰ Previously, according to Malagasy housing: the kitchen, animals' houses, and bedroom were in the same room.

would be buried where he/she had died. Traditionally, the dead should be buried in his/her own village, wherever it may be.

Through the seven commitments, Rainisoalambo exhorted the twelve people to be a model of the values of the Gospel in their calling and to conduct their lives with transparency and integrity. Rainisoalambo's knowledge of the environment in which the Malagasy lived helped him to succeed in his preaching⁴¹. For example, in accordance with the Malagasy tradition, when someone died, there were several customs to follow, including the killing of cows. Rainisoalambo knew that even Christian people followed this tradition. But when he was converted, he taught the Christians that when one of them died, they would pray and have funeral service, but the "*lofo*" (killing of cows) would be stopped because it was a waste of wealth. The teaching of Rainisoalambo convinced the Christians. This was unlike the missionaries, who had denounced Malagasy culture as sinful without convinced teaching.

In brief, Rainisoalambo showed that as disciples of the Lord, they should be models for the others in life, in love, in faith, in speech and in purity. Noël Rabemanantsoa (1984:15) states that the missionary Theodor Olsen was surprised when he visited Ambatoreny at the end of 1895, and saw clean people, united and living in prayer and biblical study, tilling the soil together with songs and prayers. He was surprised to see a big change that was not imported or imitated, but just a practice of the commitment upheld by these indigenous Christians. Thus, the teaching of Rainisoalambo was indigenous because it was based upon his knowledge of his environment, especially the customs; he kept the culture but changed it to suit the Holy Scripture.

5.2.2 The liturgy

The term "liturgy" is taken in its larger sense as worship and celebration. This includes prayers and songs.

⁴¹ Interview with Ralaimavo Seraphin, on 20th January 2004, in Antananarivo.

The Betsileo's prayer in particular, and Malagasy in general, are marked by a culture of rhetoric. The use of prayer indicates that the Malagasy Christians understood the divine message: their relationship with God, the sense of respect and an understanding of Jesus Christ's role. According to Chase Salomon Osborn (1924:88):

We may reflect with pleasure on the devotion of these people, who address rhetorically the Supreme Being on every occasion for His aid and assistance when in necessity or distress: and with true piety and hearts full of gratitude return Him their humble and unfeigned thanks for these blessings and benefits He confers upon them.

Prayers took place in the liturgy that the revival called *fotoa-malalaka* (free time), in which many Christians could participate in free prayer, testimony, admonition, and teaching. The prayer is the fruit of inculturated theology and from the message having to take indigenization into account.

As far as songs are concerned, the *zafindraony*⁴² are typically indigenous, religious hymns that distinguish the Betsileo from other tribes in Madagascar. It had already existed before the arrival of Christianity, but at that time they were secular songs. When Rainisoalambo and his friends repented, they transformed them into religious hymns and used them in a Christian service. Rainisoalambo even composed some *zafindraony* songs kept in the hymnbook of the revivalists.

Neither the rhythm nor the lyrics of *zafindraony* songs were to be found anywhere. They did not appear in the imported hymnbooks of the missionaries such as Charles Wesley, Ira Sankey, John Newton or Isaac Watt. The *zafindraony* were authentic Malagasy songs, indigenous songs of Betsileo origin.

Since the *zafindraony* had a rhythm similar to the folk songs of the Betsileo territory, the missionaries forbade that they be sung at the worship service, as Gow (1979: 237) states:

Malagasy modes of singing were condemned and all forms of indigenous music, especially the *zafindraony*, were banned from worship service. Many missionaries were confronted with the question of Malagasy music and singing as soon as they arrived in the island, but they soon found that it was not possible to fit either into

⁴² *Zafindraony* are totally inculturated songs.

a European mould. In the end they concluded that the only acceptable form of music and singing was the one they had learned in Great Britain, so they forbade Malagasy forms of music and singing and replaced them with the sacred music of the Church of England and British Nonconformity.

Fortunately, when Rainisoalambo and his friends were converted, they sang this type of song in the worship, with other indigenous hymns. Ralaimavo⁴³ states that the revivalists belonged to the established churches [the majority being Lutherans]. They followed the liturgy with all Christians and sang hymns from overseas. But after the worship, before the closing of the service, the missionary or pastor handed over the service to the revivalists. These started their services with the indigenous hymn *Misaora an'i Zanahary*⁴⁴ (Praise the Lord), which was authentically Malagasy because it had been sung since the time of Queen Ranavalona II, in 1868, and had a similar rhythm to the *zafindraony*. Before the preaching, they sang *Avia Jehovah Tomponay*⁴⁵ (Come Jehovah our Lord), also typically Malagasy in rhythm and lyrics. Before the empowerment and the laying on of hands, they sang *Avia Fanahy ô*⁴⁶ (Come Holy Spirit), an indigenous song. This means that the revivalists brought indigenous songs to their indigenous worship services, as these were indigenous songs that had already been sung before Ranavalona II's time, in 1868. This was highly criticized by the missionaries, as Gow (1979: 153) reports:

In addition, far too many practices of a Malagasy flavour were in evidence, said the missionaries, such as the Malagasy mode of singing: "...there grew up a style of singing which was not very edifying or suitable for worship; airs picked up from European songs and band music, or original compositions of their own, which are very unlike our ideas of sacred music..." The Church had to be cleansed of these unorthodox practices, they maintained, but until about 1868 no one knew what method to employ.

The liturgy of the revivalists is still indigenous to this day, because the missionaries did not bring it from overseas or teach it to the indigenous people. It is, rather, a great indigenous heritage from Rainisoalambo and his followers.

⁴³ Interview on 20th January 2004, in Antananarivo.

⁴⁴ Hymn No 2 in the FFPM hymnbook.

⁴⁵ Hymn No 438 in the FFPM hymnbook.

⁴⁶ Hymn No 175 in the FFPM hymnbook.

5.2.3 Clothing

Pierrot Men⁴⁷, a writer-photographer, called Soatanàna “a white village” because all people staying there wore white robes and clothes. The main origin of these white clothes was basically Rainisoalambo’s teachings about the cleanliness of the house, yard, and the body, according to commitment number four. Rabehatonina (2000:28) confirms this by stating that the white clothes of the revivalists were a sign of cleanliness and holiness. The relevant point that I want to illustrate is not about colour, but concerns the particular style or shape of the clothes.

Rainisoalambo and his followers wore white robes in a style called *didy mananjara*. It was a long robe, falling to the calf, gathered at the chest and the back, and opened in front from the neck to the chest. Ralaimavo⁴⁸ confirms that *didy mananjara* is an indigenous item of clothing, because, at the time of the missionaries when people were converted, they stopped wearing the *didy mananjara* and wore European clothes such as shirts, trousers, blouses, skirts, and so on. But when Rainisoalambo was converted, he returned to these indigenous clothes, which had been worthy clothes before the arrival of the Europeans. Ratongavao (1997:80) states that the indigenous Christians claimed a Church liberated from foreign clothes, stemming from the first contact of Christianity with Malagasy cultures. As a result, Rainisoalambo urged his followers to wear the *didy mananjara* as a mark of equality between each other, to cover the difference of life station between them. Thus, these clothes represented the Malagasy as what they were, and also represented Christianity. Dada Rajosoa⁴⁹ adds that the *didy mananjara* was a sign of humbleness; in Soatanàna none is allowed to receive of guests, unless they are wearing *didy mananjara*.

In addition, all Malagasy, men and women, wear *lamba* (cloth) over their clothes. This was an indigenous fashion. Rainisoalambo and his followers wore *lamba* to cover their

⁴⁷ Pierrot Men, “Soatanàna: le village blanc”, in “Revue de l’Océan Indien” No 197, Nov. 1999, pp.51-58.

⁴⁸ Interview on 20th January 2004, in Antananarivo.

⁴⁹ Interview on 8th January 2004, in Soatanàna- Fianarantsoa.

clothes, with straw hats for the men, and hairstyles arranged to the back for the women. According to Arthur Stratton (1964:4),

The Malagasy men and women wore the *lamba*, a kind of shawl; it served as blanket and as shroud: woven of wild silk or cotton. Today the *lamba* is a symbol of independence.

In brief, Rainisoalambo brought the indigenous clothes and *lamba* back to his disciples and followers.

5.2.4 Healing

Indigenization touches the pastoral ministry in its form of counsel and spiritual charge as well. Exorcism is an essential aspect of this ministry. Most Malagasy people, Christians included, agree that sickness, like all cases of misfortune, finds its true explanation in a mystical cosmic reality. Thus, they insist on inquiring about the why of a misfortune, even though it may be quite obvious; for it is in the understanding of the why that the appropriate cure can be prescribed.

The major answer of the why is rooted in the belief of the spirit world. The Malagasy people believe, through their religions, that they get sickness and misfortune from the spirit world, as Rasolondraibe (1989: 346) confirms:

Religion is the effort of the human community to enlist the help of all positive forces (the spirit world: ancestors and divinities; the symbolic world; blessings and curses; and God) to protect life. Harmony must be kept permanent. Religion, then, is also the effort to mend any ruptures in the fabric of life by removing their causes and thus healing the weakened life force through reconciliation.

So, to fight against the spirit world, Malagasy people needed a demonology. Through his revival, Rainisoalambo knew how to develop his demonology and use it in his exorcism ministry. When he sent the *Iraka*, he recommended to them: "Do not act like the actual preachers: they preach but do not heal nor exorcise, do all of these" (Thunem et al 2001,21).

The Malagasy people distinguish between two types of sickness: organic sickness that can be healed with pharmaceuticals and spiritual sickness, which is from the spirit world, according to their beliefs, and always requires the practice of exorcism. For this second type of sickness, the shepherd ministry of the revival movement carries out healing ministry in the Malagasy Protestant churches almost exclusively. The shepherd ministry came into being in 1894, following Rainisoalambo's conversion. A ministry of evangelism through healing and mutual empowerment began.

Thus, the practice of exorcism is in the charge of the *iraka* and particularly the *mpiandry*. How do they practice healing through exorcism? Rasolondraibe (1989:349-50) describes the form and contents of healing services as follows:

Basic to every healing service are proclamation of the Word of God, repentance, and prayer. A healing service usually begins with a hymn of invocation of the Holy Spirit; then one of the shepherds prays, another reads the "liturgical" texts (Mark 16:14-18; John 20:21-23), and a third delivers a short but powerfully moving exhortation. The main theme is generally repentance and trust in the love of God in Jesus Christ. People respond by opening themselves to Christ and to the inner searching of the Holy Spirit. Most of the people present weep openly and loudly, asking forgiveness of God or of one another. Then, the shepherds move in. Together, with a loud voice, they command the demonic powers to depart. This is called the general challenge, because it is addressed to the whole assembly. This is deemed necessary, according to some shepherds, because of the deceptive nature of the demons, who hide themselves among the Christians; they must be challenged to show themselves

After scriptural lessons and repentance comes the laying on of hands and prayer. A shepherd lays his or her right hand on the head of the kneeling person and says: "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I have the authority to perform this ministry to you." Then, the prayer follows; the service concludes with a word of encouragement from the Scripture.⁵⁰

Moreover, Rainisoalambo was also the founder of the *toby* (camp) ministry. A *toby* is place where healing takes place in the context of a caring community. Rainisoalambo's *toby* was modeled after Acts 4: 32-35 – a self-reliant community of production and just distribution, where "no one is rich and no one is poor", like the wearing of white *didy mananjara* clothes. Families who experience healing at the *toby* may choose to live there permanently, as is the case of most people living in Soatanàna.

⁵⁰ It is Ankaramalaza's custom or teachings.

To sum up, both the *mpiandry* (shepherds) and the *toby* (camp) are indigenous instruments brought about by Rainisoalambo to realize the pastoral approach through the indigenous system, like healing through exorcism. Healing and exorcisms done by Rainisoalambo and his followers solved the problems experienced by the people at this time. The sick were healed through prayer and the laying on of hands done by the *iraka* and *mpiandry*. These people promoted the revival movement that spread to several parts of the island. The shepherd ministry was originally a pastoral approach used by Rainisoalambo and his followers and so is part of the indigenization of the Malagasy Protestant churches, as Rasolondraibe (1989: 344) confirms:

The shepherd ministry is an indigenous movement which has grown within the Malagasy Lutheran Church and has strengthened both its outreach and pastoral ministry.

5.2.5 Cooperative labour

The Betsileo were accustomed to working in cooperation with each other as subsistence farmers. They did all their work communally; they helped each other and in this way completed more (Razaka, 2003: 27). For example, one day, all the people, especially the men of the village, gave one family a hand in tilling the soil. The following day, the same people did the same work for another family, and so on, for each family in the community. So, the aim of cooperative labour was doing all the work with each other's help and without spending much money on the salaries of workers. Moreover, it improved the unity and love for one another in the community, which was very valuable to the Malagasy people.

Rainisoalambo grew up with this custom of working in cooperation. When he was converted, he took this custom and improved it. He led the revivalists to practice cooperative labour so as to realize the fifth commitment: "growing vegetables, rice [work]...[planting], fruit trees in order to get [more] food." Ralaimavo⁵¹ explains that when the first revivalists (the 13 people, including Rainisoalambo) started to live communally, they were confronted with the problems of money and materials.

⁵¹ Interview on 20th January 2004, in Antananarivo.

Rainisoalambo urged them to plant vegetables and developed a common agricultural production. Through communal work, increased crop production led to a yield surplus which was then sold or traded for the materials, clothes, Bibles, etc, that were needed.

From the beginning, Rainisoalambo used the fifth commitment as a basis for his teaching about the autonomy in food, money, and materials. He practiced, directly, the life of the Apostles in Acts 2: 44, "all the believers were together and had everything in common." All those who joined them received solutions to their spiritual problems and to their problems of money and materials. The aim of Rainisoalambo was to make revivalists independent from the Church.

Razaka (2003: 29) states that at the beginning of the cooperative labour effort, the goal was "to get [a lot of] food", the majority of which was to supply the pilgrims who visited Soatanàna. Thus, the majority of the production from the cooperative labour was set apart for the guests who sojourned in this village.

Rainisoalambo and his followers, or the disciples of the Lord, started to plant vegetables at the beginning, and after this, they tilled the rice fields to plant rice. Razaka argues that the revivalists did not only succeed in cultivation, but did other things that were advantageous to evangelisation, such as making bricks, masonry, carpentry, craft (weaving of mats, embroidery), cleaning of the community, and the planting of fruit trees (2003:29).

Ralaimavo⁵² confirms that all Malagasy churches that had a relationship with Soatanàna devoted one day a week, Wednesdays, to the practice of cooperative labour. According to Rabehatonina (2000:29), cooperative labour became a permanent custom of the revivalists on Wednesdays, which they devoted to crop cultivation. Thunem et al (2001:84) add that the neighbouring people also supported cooperative labour: they gave their cows to trample the mud in rice fields before the transplanting of rice, they came to

⁵² Interview on 20th January 2004, in Antananarivo.

participate even though they were not members of the revivalist movement, but because the cooperative labour was a custom of Betsileo.

There was a difference in attitude toward cooperative labour amongst Christians and non-Christians. For the former, cooperative labour focused on the advantages to the community, while for the latter, it focused on individual advantages, because when you call somebody today for your work, tomorrow or the next time you will be called for his work.

To sum up, the practice of cooperative labour was a Malagasy custom, existing before the arrival of the missionaries. The Betsileo people, a majority of peasant agriculturalists, famous for growing rice, continued to practice cooperative labour. Rainisoalambo brought this custom to the Christian community and urged his followers to practice it. His aim in cooperative labour was to get enough food to feed the visitors who sojourned in Soatanàna, supply the *iraka* and *mpiandry* for the propagating of the Gospel (self-propagating), help the individual with needs such as clothes, Bibles, and so on (self-supporting).

But what were the fruits of cooperative labour, for the revival's way of life? Cooperative labour brought about financial independence and materials for the revivalists. It could support the daily needs of the community. Cooperative labour also was a sign of unity and love for one another amongst the revivalists. It supported the spreading of the gospel through the work of *iraka* (apostles). Apart from those who came for their personal spiritual needs, there was a great religious meeting every year (ending on 17th September) in Soatanàna; all people who attended this meeting, which lasted one week, were provided with food from the cooperative labour practice. In *toby* (camp), the revivalists took care of the sick, looked after the poor, orphans, widows, and the *iraka* who were too old to do their work and used the fruit of cooperative labour practice to support these ministries. Cooperative labour brought progress to the revivalists, because they felt self-sufficient in terms of food, according to Rainisoalambo's teaching "... in order to get [a lot of] food" (Razaka: 2003: 34-36).

The indigenization of the Malagasy Protestant churches was marked by the practice of cooperative labour brought about by Rainisoalambo, with the aim of self-government, self-propagation, and self-support in the development of the Church, through the revival movement.

5.2.6 Leadership

Indigenization also concerns leadership. Those primarily responsible for the local extension of the kingdom of God are the nationals. When Rainisoalambo was converted, his first initiative was to visit his family, who still retained their talismans and had fallen into poverty due to sickness. Rainisoalambo felt it was his responsibility, as a leader, to advise and urge his family to do as he had done, and follow Christianity. Ralaimavo⁵³ explains that when Rainisoalambo's teaching had reached the people, they trained themselves through services and prayer meeting at Rainisoalambo's house. The leader was Rainisoalambo himself. He did not inform the missionaries about what had happened in his and his followers' lives; he did not ask for guidance from them. Without hesitation, he started the service as a leader. He had already practiced the policy of self-government.

One can enumerate Rainisoalambo's contribution to the indigenization for the evangelisation:

1) Before Rainisoalambo, there was neither exorcism nor healing through prayer in the Malagasy Protestant churches, even though Jesus had commanded it. Rainisoalambo started this office in the Church. At the beginning, missionaries and ministers were doubtful of the effectiveness of the *iraka*, who emphasized the ministry of healing and exorcising through prayer and the laying on hands. But after viewing the efficiency of the evangelisation that they had performed, missionaries, pastors, and leaders of churches were convinced and accepted the Rainisoalambo's ministry as a gift from God (Edland 2002: 140). Rainisoalambo was the first person to practice this ministry. This shows that he was an indigenous leader.

⁵³ Interview on 20 January 2004, in Antananarivo.

2) Rainisoalambo was a good organizer. Because of his wish to be financially independent, he urged his followers to start with what they had: to plant vegetables, and improve on that through craft and cooperative labour. These works could support all the needs of the community with regard to money, food, the payment of tax, sending of *iraka*, hospitality for the pilgrims, and so on. He succeeded in making the revival movement self-supporting.

3) The emergence of the *mpiandry* and the *toby* was Rainisoalambo's initiative, with no help or suggestions from the missionaries or other Church leaders. Rasolondraibe (1989:348-50) states:

Today [in 1989], there are more than 7.000 shepherds in the Malagasy Lutheran Church, some of them living in more than 200 *tobys* throughout the island. The revival movement has not been contained in the Lutheran Church. It is also officially recognized by the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (Reformed) and has been well received in the Malagasy Episcopal Ecclesia (Anglican) and Roman Catholic churches. Thus, there are shepherds belonging to and working in these three denominations.

4) During Rainisoalambo's collaboration with the Church, his responsibilities and those of the missionaries had been clearly distinguished. The part of the revival movement that involved teaching, consecration, and sending of *iraka* were the tasks of Rainisoalambo, while baptism and Holy Communion were the duties of the missionaries. Rainisoalambo retained his place as leader in the revival movement until his death.

Rainisoalambo, as an indigenous leader, presented the principles which were to govern both the spiritual and the material lives of the revival movement. Based on love for one another, these principles focused on agricultural community tasks in an atmosphere of religious enthusiasm because his target for the revival movement, and later for the Church, was to be self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting.

To summarize, Rainisoalambo was the native leader who promoted the indigenization of leadership.

5.3 Rainisoalambo's legacy in the churches today

After ten years of evangelisation through the revival movement, Rainisoalambo died on 30 June 1904. Ten years previously, he had indigenized the movement, which was definitively integrated into the Church from 1901, after a close collaboration with the Church, more especially Protestant churches. He was gone away but his legacy still remains in the Malagasy Protestant churches, as the followings:

5.3.1 The healing ministry

The majority of the Reformed churches, especially in Antananarivo, devote every Wednesday evening to a service of healing ministry⁵⁴. The revivalists in the Church follow the liturgy of revival that was in use in Rainisoalambo's time. Beginning with exorcism and the laying on of hands for the empowerment of the Christians, especially the sick, the Reformed Church inherited Rainisoalambo's method of driving out the demons. In the Reformed Church, there is only one person who commands the demonic powers to depart. This person does not move, but stays at the front of the Church.⁵⁵ After the demon is driven out, all the shepherds lay their hands on the head of the kneeling person, and the ensuing sequence is similar for all *tobys* (camp).

In several Lutheran churches, the healing ministry is currently included in the service on Sunday mornings. After the sermon, there is the collection, the notice and the healing ministry, which begins and ends with the final benediction.⁵⁶ This explains why the Lutheran Church considers the healing ministry as a full service.

In summary, each Protestant Church has its healing ministry in the Church. Every Wednesday evening, the majority of Protestant churches in town practice the healing ministry through exorcism, the laying on of hands and prayer. This indicates that the Church accepts and is pleased with the healing ministry brought about by Rainisoalambo.

⁵⁴ Interview of 20th January 2004, in Antananarivo.

⁵⁵ Compare to Ankaramalaza's custom in p.11 in this chapter.

⁵⁶ Interview on 20th January 2004, in Antananarivo.

5.3.2 The training of *mpiandry*

Rasolondraibe (1989: 349) mentions that to become a shepherd, a communicant member (male or female) of the Lutheran or the Reformed churches follows a two-year training program at a designated centre. This indicates that the training of *mpiandry* has become an important duty of the Protestant churches. In fact, it has spread to the Anglican and Catholic churches as well. According to E. Victor Rakotoarivelo (1997:223):

The eighth Anglican diocesan synod of July 1990 confirms the existence of official shepherds and renewal within the diocesan structure. The Anglican shepherds work with those of the other churches (Lutheran and Reformed). . . . We, Anglican shepherds, we believe in the healing of hearts and healing of bodies by the laying on of hands or extreme unction with prayers. The healing comes from God. . . . We practice this healing ministry, maybe in the Church, or in the house, or in the hospital, it depends on the call.⁵⁷

Rasolondraibe concludes that the revival movement is also officially recognized by the Reformed, Anglican, and Catholic churches. Thus, there are shepherds belonging to and working in these three denominations, but they were trained and commissioned in the Lutheran Church (1989:349-50). For fifteen years now, the Reformed Church, has trained its own shepherds, at a centre called SEFALA (Centre of training for the lay persons). Each Regional Synod has its own centre. The Reformed Church does not send its members to be trained by Lutherans.

An important point is that the Malagasy churches, particularly the Protestants, keep to Rainisoalambo's teaching with respect to the training of shepherds to this day, even though they are 110 years old (1894-2004). The number of persons who undergo this training increases every year. This means that the number of shepherds who work in the Church also increases every year.

⁵⁷ According to my translation

5.3.3 The liturgical texts

All-important Christian ceremonies, such as marriage, baptism or communion, each have liturgical texts as a scriptural foundation. Like these important Christian ceremonies in the Church, the healing ministry brought by Rainisoalambo has its own liturgical texts that are read before the healing ministry, such as the following: John 14:12-17, Mark 16:15-20, Matthew 18:18-20, and John 20:21-23 (Rabehatonina, 1989: 43). Rainisoalambo gave these liturgical texts to the *iraka* and *mpiandry* in founding the healing ministry and read them before the healing services.

All revival movements in Malagasy Protestant churches, wherever they are from (Soatanàna- Manolotrony- Ankaramalaza- Farihimena – the Reformed revival), keep to the four liturgical texts of Rainisoalambo, which are read before the healing ministry.⁵⁸ These liturgical texts are considered to be the foundation of the healing ministry and solidify the unity of all revivalists, because all of them have inherited it from Rainisoalambo and still keep to it in its original form.

5.3.4 The *zafindraony* songs

The revival meetings are distinguished from other meetings by the singing of *zafindraony* songs. During the time of the missionaries, changing the European tune was not allowed.⁵⁹ With the revival brought about by Rainisoalambo, the Christians changed the same European songs into *zafindraony*. Even the spiritual feelings during the two kinds of songs are different. At present, the Church, under the indigenous leaders, is free to sing this type of song inherited from Rainisoalambo. The number of churches that use the *zafindraony* in their services has increased in town as well as in the countryside.

The Malagasy like the *zafindraony*. They do not only sing it in the Church or in revival meetings, but also when there is a funeral, an evening gathering, or when a family or

⁵⁸ Interview on 12th December 2003, in Antananarivo.

⁵⁹ Interview on 20th January 2004 in Antananarivo.

Christians are going to travel on a long trip. Razaka (2003:31) notes that every Wednesday morning in Soatanàna, when the people left the village to labour, they sang *zafindraony* while walking to the rice or other fields.

5.3.5 The revival as a living branch of the Church

Rabehatonina (2002:103-104) writes that revival is the property of the Church. It is a branch, which has a special spiritual gift of laying on of hands, driving out demons, healing the sick, and taking care of Christians through love and prayer... Like the other branches, the revival follows the organization and rule of the Church.

In the Reformed Church, amongst the eight branches such as Sunday School, *Dorcas* or Women's Association, Men's Association, Scouts (boy and girl), Youth, Blue Cross, Lay, and Revival, the revival is the strongest branch; rich in people and money. The Church that had a revival branch became strong both materially and spiritually.

In brief, the revival of Rainisoalambo is alive and growing in the Reformed Church. Even though this denomination adopts a small part of the customs of each *toby*, the majority of the customs that it uses are from Soatanàna. Additionally, the Reformed Church financially supports the revivals of Soatanàna. According to Rabehatonina (2000:108), 96% of the money used in Soatanàna is from the Reformed Church, raised through the collections from the 9 June and 10 August meetings. 99% of the requests for the *iraka* are from the Reformed Church, and two thirds of *iraka* in Soatanàna are from the Reformed Church. One can affirm that the revival of Soatanàna is well received in the Reformed Church.

5.4 Impact of Rainisoalambo's teachings

Rainisoalambo led and taught the revivalists of Soatanàna for ten years (1894-1904). During this time, large numbers of people were converted and left their "pagan" lives. The number of disciples of the Lord also increased. Thunem et al (2001:25) state that in

1904 the number of *iraka* consecrated and sent to continue the work of the revival, which was the propagation of the Gospel through preaching, healing ministry, and the establishment of new churches, was fifty. In looking at the impact of Rainisoalambo's teachings, it is necessary to consider both its positive and negative aspects.

5.4.1 The negative impact of Rainisoalambo's teachings: the schism in 1954

Since the revivalists increased continuously, the disciples of the Lord attempted to ask the French colony to allow them to be an independent organisation in 1907, but their request was rejected (Thunem et al, 2001:35). So the revival remained in the Lutheran Church in Soatanàna, under the Norwegian mission.

In 1949, a Norwegian missionary named Kørner-Hansen arrived to lead the district of Soatanàna. He had openly criticised the absence of ecclesiastical order in the revival. He began a determined attempt to improve the collaboration with the revival through a local committee, to regularize the training of the *iraka*, and, in short, to institutionalise the revival (Barrett, 1968: 214). According to Rabehatonina (2000:37), in 1950, the committee decided to print a book recording all the commitments performed since 1936. The title of this book would be *Rules and constitution for carrying the revival*. After the book was printed in 1951, it was disseminated to all the members of the revival, particularly the *iraka*. Unfortunately, the majority of the *iraka* were not pleased with this book, and were vehemently opposed to what was written in it. Leaflets were scattered to all the regions in order to thwart distribution of this book. The missionary, Kørner Hansen, and a local committee kept to the decisions written in the book, which were not their personal ideas, but the ideas of all 17th September committees. Consequently, to avoid the disturbance that would occur, the meeting on 17th September 1954 was held. The *iraka* took advantage of the fact that the meeting was being held to say that the Lutheran mission excommunicated them. They published a letter and sent copy to the District Chief in Fianarantsoa, which said that since 17 September 1954, the disciples of the Lord were no longer members of the Lutheran Church in Soatanàna.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Official Minutes of the meeting of the Disciples of the Lord, on 17 September 1954, p.21.

According to Barrett (1968:215):

After five years of increasing uneasiness and discord between missionaries and *iraka*, secession finally took place in 1955; the vast majority of the two hundred *iraka* of the northern part of the Soatanàna revival seceded under Rajoelina and were excommunicated by the Lutheran mission. Only the southern part remained within the Church, a mere ten per cent of the whole. Shortly afterwards, the missionary primarily responsible was removed and the mission attempted a reconciliation, but it was too late; the *iraka* were no longer interested. From now on, they ran their own affairs. At first the ejected *Fifohazana* (revival) worked largely within the other Protestant churches, and had refused to recognize the Lutheran excommunication.

However, the revival continued in the way in which Rainisoalambo had established it. It collaborated with the Church from the beginning. Fifty years after Rainisoalambo, the majority of *iraka* wanted their independence. Rabehatonina (2000:40) notes that it was recognized that the majority of *iraka* who worked across the island, preached incorrectly because their knowledge of the Holy Scripture was not complete; rather, they were only interested in the customs. The missionary, Kørner-Hansen, was convinced that these *iraka* needed to study again. The revival would be situated in its right place: integrated into the Church and following the rule of the Church. The 15 verses written by Rainisoalambo had to be kept, particularly the verse 10 which stated that the revivals' treasurer would be the missionary in Soatanàna. The liturgy used in Soatanàna was the Lutheran liturgy. But those *iraka* who had left the missionary Church did not agree with the missionary proposals for the following reasons:

Neither they want any rules (law) because they were under the grace of Jesus nor any teaching because the Spirit led them. They did not need the missionaries because the missionaries were not yet awake. They did not want to be governed by the Church because they felt that the revival should govern the Church (Rabehatonina, 2000:40).

To put an end to this schism, the majority of *iraka*, with their followers who had left the Lutheran Church, started to celebrate service at the *trano firaketana* (treasure's house) since 1955; with this came the title: "association". In 1960, their leader applied to the government for registration as an independent Church (granted in 1963), despite the

disapproval of many revivalists⁶¹. The revival movement had been attempting to acquire status as an independent organisation from the state since 1907. In 1963, it officially became an independent Church. There is a clear link between independence and the renewal movements within the churches. This independent Church, called F.F.S.M, affirmed that it would always keep to the teachings of Rainisoalambo. But how does this tie in with verse 6 of the status of the disciples of the Lord from 1936 which states:

The revival of the disciples of the Lord is not a new denomination, and does not have any special Church, but belongs with the denomination which exists in the region in which it worked. So, it [the revival] does not baptize, but those who are convinced by its teachings will be carried to the leaders of churches in this region, so that they teach them confirmation or catechumen (Thunem et al, 2001:44).

The independent revival Church has built a big Church of stone, as well as many other independence churches on the island. This illustrates that the original tenet of verse 6 of the status was not upheld, as Barrett (1968:215) notes:

After 1961, relations deteriorated and the movement became decidedly anti-mission, rival churches were opened, new secessions occurred, and the *Église du Réveil* that they formed became the largest separatist Church on the island, with 50 000 adult members.

5.4.2 The positive impact of Rainisoalambo's teachings

The revivalists who remained in the Lutheran Church were a minority; they professed to follow the way in which Rainisoalambo had established them. They were convinced that the migration of Rainisoalambo from Ambatoreny to Soatanàna, the integration of the revival in the Church and the collaboration with the missionaries were God's plan, that is why they remained in the Lutheran Church. Fortunately, other revivalists like Ankaramalaza, Farihimena, Manolotrony, and those who belong to the Reformed Church supported those who remained in the Church through an annual visit, on the date of celebration at each *toby* (Rabehatonina, 2000:100).

⁶¹ *Fanazavana momba ny Fifohazana Ambatoreny-Soatanàna (Explanation about the revival Ambatoreny-Soatanàna)* Leaflet 2004, Tranoprinty Md Paoly, Fianarantsoa, pp.37, 38.

The first impact of Rainisoalambo's teachings is the conviction of the leaders of Protestant churches that the revival is a gift from God to the Church, as Paul Ramino (1992:417) explains: the last Intermission Conference in Antsirabe in 1958 clearly determined the place of the revival in the Church. The Federation of the Protestant Revivals (Reformed and Lutheran) was established in 1989. The revival is now a strong power in the Church.

The second impact of Soatanàna concerns the teachings of Rainisoalambo. From the beginning, Rainisoalambo taught his followers to be self-sufficient or independent (food, money, materials, etc). Indigenization and independence are seen as inseparable, as Bowen (1998:131) notes: "The independent churches are also indigenous because their life and faith is indigenous to local African culture and philosophy".

But Rainisoalambo remained in the established Church until his death. The independence that Rainisoalambo recommended was that the disciples of the Lord would remain in the established Church; however, his aim was that the Church should be self-governing by an indigenous leader, self-supporting in its needs and not like a beggar always asking for funds from overseas, and self-propagating in evangelisation as he had done through the *iraka* (Tippet, 1979:60-64). In other words, according to Rainisoalambo's teaching, true independence starts with physical labour with what one has (soil, spades, and other materials), and not by waiting for money to start being independent.

Edland (2002:143-44) explains that the first synod of the Lutheran Church was held in 1902 in Fandriana. Apart from the delegation from each Church, there were 432 *iraka* who attended this first Synod. The main emphasis of this meeting was: "the synod [as] a meeting of Christians elected by the Church, that examines their own affairs, has the highest power in the Malagasy Lutheran Church, through the Malagasy affairs. The synod is the Churches' delegation in the relationship with the Society of mission." It was the first demand for the indigenization of the Lutheran Church as Ratongavao (1997:81) confirms:

The claims of the indigenous Malagasy Church had been reiterated each time where the Christians had an opportunity to show it. One can refer in this respect

to a famous discourse of Rabary in Faravohitra, in September 1913, after the meeting of Edinburgh, 1910. Living its faith in its own culture (language and local value) is a part of the first indigenous Christians' wishes.

The presence of 432 *iraka* at this first synod may serve to emphasize the success of indigenization as brought about and practised by Rainisoalambo. They were the eyewitnesses of this success. But unfortunately, in 1903 Lars Dahle, the general secretary of the Norwegian mission, rejected this synod's proposal of "indigenization".

The colonisation of Madagascar started on 6th August 1896. This indicates that Rainisoalambo's revival movement worked within an established colony. Consequently, the thirst for independence was felt everywhere, and in all Malagasy hearts. M.J Meeg, a Norwegian missionary who worked in Soatanàna in 1896-1903, mentioned by H. Hovland (1995:22), affirms that in the new political situation in Madagascar, several people considered the revival movement as a medium to get independence back and for proving opposition against the colonial authorities.

In brief, the independence taught and practised by Rainisoalambo and the revival movement in Soatanàna exhorted the Malagasy people to search for the independence of their country and churches. This means a search for Malagasy as it had been: Malagasy leaders would manage the Church within Malagasy cultures. Numerous Christians contributed to this search for independence. Edland (2002:196-97) explains that, in 1944, a Norwegian missionary called Fritjov Birkeli proposed a full constitution for the Lutheran Church and had spread it to all Norwegian missionaries for improvement. On falling ill, he moved to South Africa for medical treatment and later returned to Norway. Arriving in Norway, he reminded the Norwegian mission superintendent of his decision. So, in 1950, at the general synod in Fianarantsoa, the Lutheran Church gained its independence and took the new name: *Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy* (Malagasy Lutheran Church). But from 1950 until 1961, the Lutheran president was still under the control of the Norwegians. In 1961, the first Malagasy president of the FLM appeared: Rakoto Andrianarijaona. This was the realisation of Rainisoalambo's teaching on self-government. The leaders were Malagasy, the Church had its Malagasy synod, and the

Norwegians who still worked in the Lutheran Church had to follow the Malagasy Lutheran Church's constitution and rules.

When Madagascar gained its independence in 1960, the Church played an important role in the life of the country, because the number of Christians increased to around 20% of the whole population. The Second Council of Vatican brought an evolution in the life of the Roman Catholic Church, such as the celebration of the liturgy in the Malagasy language and an increase in the indigenization in the Church; to replace the Latin and Gregorian songs, the Malagasy Catholic Church introduced many indigenous songs, with both tunes and verses from all the tribes of Madagascar (Bruno Hübsch, 1992: 505).

The Reformed Church had its independence in 1968, after the fusion of three denominations (LMS- FFMA – FPM) and chose the name: *Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara* (Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar), or Reformed Church. The original division of Madagascar into two parts, one for the Reformed and one for the Lutherans was abolished in 1971: both could work in all parts of the island. Close collaboration between the two denominations facilitated the fusion of their hymnbooks into one (Ramino Paul, 1992:401).

Now, the Reformed and Lutheran denominations have their own liturgy, their own organisation under the Malagasy leaders and make all efforts to develop the indigenization of all churches. This emphasis on indigenization in the independent churches [Reformed and Lutheran] has its roots in Ranisoalambo's teachings of the self-government, self-support and self-propagation.

To sum up, the positive impact of Soatanàna was to push the Malagasy churches, especially the Protestant Church, to search for independence through self-government, self-support and self-propagation of their churches. In terms of self-government, all leaders in the Protestant Church are Malagasy, and the constitution and the rules of the Church suit the Malagasy customs and culture. In terms of self-support, the Church supports itself in all offices of the ministry, of the synod, with the sending out of

evangelists or catechists, and with the establishment of new churches, with no help from overseas. In terms of self-propagation, the Protestant churches (Reformed and Lutheran) have several parishes in Europe, (in France, and in Switzerland), in the United States, and in Canada (only a Malagasy Reformed Church) with the revival movement inherited by Rainisoalambo.

The revival of Soatanàna has its impact overseas. Felix Ratrema (1938:392) explains that, in France, several people appreciated the book written by Elisée Escande entitled *Les disciples du Seigneur* (the disciples of the Lord). This work is also known in Germany and Czechoslovakia and has been translated into the respective languages. The Norwegian Christians in Norway did not forget the Malagasy revival as it strengthened their faith and exhorted them to be enthusiastic towards Christianity. Many houses in Norway had photographs of Rainisoalambo, Ravelonjanahary and Rajaofera either hung on the wall, or kept inside a Bible or Hymnbook.

5.4.3 What of the future of Soatanàna?

Nowadays, many third world countries, including Madagascar, use the slogan: “good governance”. Rainisoalambo had already used this concept. He did not know the word, but the self-government that he taught included good governance. He was very sensitive to the issue of the management of materials, cooperative labour, and the use of the harvest. For example, in Soatanàna, when you eat, it is forbidden to waste one grain of rice, or to leave food on your plate - even a grain of rice (Razaka, 2003:34). If this policy of good governance continues, the Malagasy people shall never have insufficient food. Likewise, many third world countries have a policy against poverty through the SDRP (Strategic Documents for the Reducing of Poverty). Rainisoalambo started the SDRP through his commitment number five: “Growing vegetables, rice and planting fruit trees in order to get a lot of food”.

Many theologians currently explore indigenization. Their aim is the ability to use the cultures that are suitable to the scripture, as instruments for evangelisation.

Rainisoalambo knew how to evangelise within his own culture, in his time. The future of Soatanàna depends on the dynamism of Rainisoalambo's followers to continue with what Rainisoalambo has started. For example: if, in Rainisoalambo's time, Soatanàna was a *toby* for the consecration of *iraka*, it should still continue to be a *toby*, but currently used for the training and sending out of indigenous missionaries. It involves constructing a "reform ministry" for examining the ministry of churches in order to suit indigenization.

5.5 Conclusion

We have seen that the contribution of Rainisoalambo to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar happened through the revival movement. This revival was an instrument of God, to be transmitted for the renewal of churches through a particular person chosen by Him.

Rainisoalambo, a Betsileo noble and idol-keeper, was converted by God to lead this revival movement. His teachings were basically founded on the love for one another, but he always focused on the three 'selves' of independence: self-government, self-support, and self-propagation. Also, his teaching was not a deep theology like the western theology brought by the missionaries, but a simple practice from that which he had read in the Bible.

Even though the revival phenomenon coincided with the arrival of the French colonialists, the independence that Rainisoalambo repeated in his teaching was not directly aimed at the independence of the country; rather, he started to teach, through his disciples, how the Church could gain its independence. When he preached, the people felt touched by his sermons. His sermons were easier to understand than those of missionaries, because as an indigenous preacher, he knew the problems that people lived with, the needs, and the culture of his people.

Rainisoalambo died on 30th June 1904, but his teaching is still alive in the Malagasy Protestant churches today. Both Reformed and Lutheran churches continue to practice the

following teachings of Rainisoalambo: The healing ministry through exorcism and the laying on of hands; singing of *zafindraony* in the Church; establishment of *toby* for healing; training of *mpiandry* (Soatanàna is still training both *mpiandry* and *iraka*); and the use of the four liturgical texts.

Rainisoalambo's strategy, the three 'selfs' of independence, helped the Protestant churches to gain their independence. Both the Reformed and Lutheran churches are currently self-governing (no intervention from foreign leaders), self-supporting (no help from overseas), and self-propagating (training their own evangelists and catechists through their own centers). In the Protestant churches in Madagascar, especially in the Lutheran Church (unlike numerous Lutheran churches in the world), there is no hierarchical structure of ministers, such as bishops. In the Protestant churches in Madagascar, all ministers are called pastors. It may be argued that this structure is a part of the indigenization process of Protestant churches in Madagascar.

It can be affirmed that Rainisoalambo had contributed much to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar. His teaching also spread to the Malagasy Catholic and Anglican churches. Through what has been discussed, when Rainisoalambo sent the *iraka* to preach in all regions of the island, they entrusted those who repented to the missionary, pastors or priests in these regions, so that they could baptize the new converts.

Rainisoalambo also practiced ecumenism through interdenominational preaching. The interdenominational method used by the *iraka* saw the rapid expansion of the movement (Hovland, 1995:22). Trained to be a catechist or minister at the LMS (Reformed Church) before his conversion, and after conversion he remained in the Lutheran Church,⁶² Rainisoalambo was an ecumenist from the beginning. This explains why many Catholic and Anglican Christians follow the *mpiandry* training in the Protestant churches

⁶² Previously, Soatanàna and its surroundings was a LMS area, because Richardson arrived in Fianarantsoa in 1870, the Lutheran arrived there in 1875. The LMS had constructed a Church at Ambalavato-Ambatoreny (Rainisoalambo's natal village) in which Rainisoalambo followed a training to be a catechist or minister. But for the agreement of collaboration between the LMS and NMS in 1873, the LMS gave Soatanàna and surroundings for the NMS (Edland 2002: 71-72).

and after their consecrations they return to their denominations. Ratrema (1938:395) confirms that the disciples of the Lord, according to Rainisoalambo's teachings, played the all-important role of uniting all believers. Andriatsiratahina⁶³ concludes that the revival was a gift from God to the indigenization and unification of the Malagasy Protestant churches.

⁶³ Interview on 12 December 2003, in Antananarivo.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study proposes an analysis of indigenization in Madagascar. Through indigenization, the Church can express its faith in its own culture. As this topic could not be covered in all its dimensions within the limitations of a Master of Theology thesis, I will offer a summary of the main topics covered.

In order to examine the contribution of Rainisoalambo as the father of revivals to the indigenization of the Protestant churches in Madagascar, I first considered in Chapter One how the Gospel encounters culture. If the Christian faith is generated, then the product is Christianity. Unfortunately, western missionaries brought the Gospel to Africa wrapped up within their culture. They did not consider the indigenous culture. However, without culture, people cannot encounter the true Gospel through Christianity. The main question when reflecting on the subject of African Christianity is how to express faith in the “Christ of the Gospel” through African tradition. A good answer to this question is through “indigenization”.

Chapter Two discussed different meanings of indigenization. From these different meanings, I deduced that indigenization has a similar meaning as adaptation, inculturation, and contextualization. Indigenization is the expression of faith in one’s own culture (language and local values). A large number of independent or indigenous churches developed in Africa. However, both independence and indigenization are linked to each other, as Bowen (1996:131) states that the independent churches are also indigenous because their life and faith is indigenous to their local traditions and cultures. The majority of independent churches originated from missionary churches. They left the missionary churches, as they felt oppressed by western Christianity that did not consider their local traditions and cultures. Due to this revolt against the westernisation of faith, the claims of indigenization appeared.

Even though some indigenous people aimed for the indigenization of the Church, others did not want things to be changed from the missionaries' way that they had considered to be sacred. Consequently, one can describe the Church in Africa in two categories: the first one is the Church that translated the Gospel and the Hymns into the vernacular language, but kept the form of services and the mode of singing like that of the missionaries. One can call this Church the western type of Christianity in Africa. The second one is the Church that definitively left the missionaries' way and combined Christianity with its own culture. One can call this Church indigenous. Thus, the Church leaders have a choice: to retain the way of the missionaries or to indigenize the Church. Rainisoalambo contributed to indigenizing the Malagasy Protestant churches through his preaching and teachings in the revival movement.

Since the revival made a major contribution to indigenization, it is useful to elaborate it briefly. A revival is a phenomenon, in the sense of an event that occurs rarely and arouses much surprise and curiosity. This is the case of revivals in Africa. But beyond the phenomenon of revival, there is the intervention of God who wants to breathe new life into his Church. This particular intervention has been registered in his plan for each country and the world. The history of the Church in Europe gives us the following illustrations: the reform of the 16th century, the revivals in the next century (for example, the Wesleyan in England), and the emergence of Pentecostal movements in the beginning of the 20th century in the United States – all of these are interventions of God in the history of his people.

The advent of revivals is favoured by precise factors, so we can say that the acts of God in favour of his people do not always come about in a spontaneous manner; they are prepared. We have three factors:

- 1) The reaction of African leaders against imported Christianity: They felt the need to live their faith in their cultures and wished to see Christianity as an answer to their problems. When Christianity appeared as a foreign religion because it was not rooted in the culture of the recipients, the natives took a risk in adapting to it. They adapted

themselves to the culture of the missionaries and therefore attempted to speak a discourse that was not convincing to them. Therefore, they appropriated the Gospel with difficulty. As it was shown in Chapter Three, some missionaries hesitated to pass on the flame of leadership to the natives for various reasons. With regard to the LMS who arrived in Madagascar in 1818, and became very active since 1861 after a long period of persecution, the missionaries might have entrusted the management of the Church from the mission to the natives. The emergence of the African prophets such as Rainisoalambo, William Harris, and Simon Kimbangu, after some decades of the work of western missionaries, opened a new era for Christianity in Africa, without which the Church would have sunk into lethargy. History teaches us that sinking, as a sign of decline, sometimes preceded revivals.

2) The reaction of African leaders towards colonists who conveyed an evolutionist anthropology advocating cultural hierarchy: This anthropology considered Africans as being inferior to westerners. Therefore, the natives, particularly the leaders, did not have the freedom of being equal to the missionaries, and were also less equal to the colonial administrators. This results in misunderstanding between the missionaries and the natives, and sometimes leads to a crisis or a spiritual decline.

3) The will to fight the lethargy of the existing churches: After some decades of existence, the churches feel less challenged to bring out their message. Some of them are in a state of self-satisfaction. Then, they lose their fighting spirit and their zeal for announcing the Gospel.

Nevertheless, these great figures of African Christianity were not strictly theologians. However, they had the courage to think differently. The classical theology marked by a western mode of thinking and perceiving that is very conceptual, was not always successful in helping the appropriation of the full Gospel. Moreover, it did not take into account the cultural context and religion of those receiving the Gospel. It ignored, for example, the biblical teachings about spirits or exorcism. Thus, the real and legitimate needs of African people were put on the periphery of classical theological discourse.

Through the ministry of each prophet mentioned above, the prominent points might be located from their teachings and a more appropriate theology could be developed for them. It is legitimate to conceive a new theological discourse from practice, to know about preaching, prayer, the fight against fetishism, healing and exorcism, without forgetting the basic truths of reconciliation through the work of the cross, forgiveness as a primordial need, or the Scripture as the word of God. It is noted that these practices were found in the ministry of Rainisoalambo, Simon Kimbangu and William Harris, in spite of the historical and geographical distance that separate them.

These men also dared to act differently, at the risk of losing the confidence of ecclesiastical authorities and the risk of them losing their credibility. They went where the non-believers were. For example, the *iraka* went to preach to all regions on the island even though this was difficult during colonisation. These men of God practiced the theology of proximity.

To a certain extent, the impact of the revivals that started in the 20th century is still felt in African churches. The revivals remain dynamic and continue to work for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. However, it involves giving some explanation of the African Christianity that is characterized by a new configuration of churches. We know that the traditional configuration appeared in three types of Church: the Catholic Church, the Protestant churches, a majority of which were affiliated to the "Conference of Churches of all Africa"(CCA), and the evangelical churches which had affinities with the "Evangelical Association of Africa" (EAA). From about fifteen years ago, the proliferation of neo-Pentecostals which were very different from the African Independent churches such as Harrist Church and EJCSK of Kimbangu, according to Barrett (1968: 118), changed this configuration. These churches shared the same theology (always unconscious). This theology was centred on the visible and spectacular. It developed an extra-biblical prophetic tradition and sometimes pushed the theological inheritance of the Reformation into the background. This theology also expressed a particular interest in the promise of material things and happiness for the time being, here and now. Many factors can explain the profusion of these new churches:

A postmodern environment favours the religious development of all people. As a means of access to the truth, intuition and experience known as spiritual in the postmodern world appeals to the reason and thinking of modern times. The socio-political environment encourages free enterprise and guarantees free expression. To create a Church is a relatively easy enterprise. In African culture, glaring poverty and sickness often have a spiritual cause. Thus, these new churches seek to answer the material and physical needs of men.

A hurried reading of actual African Christianity may mislead one to believe that the continent is experiencing a great revival like the one at the beginning of the previous century again.

The Church that is in Africa or the West can neither activate nor schedule a revival. God, in his sovereignty, will intervene where and when he want to. However, the Church can keep the people of God “on the alert”, for example by the basic theology which helps in the full assimilation of the Gospel. This theology has to convey the thought of God in an intelligent and intelligible way so that Christians in Africa, living in the new environment, learn to articulate the truth of God within their own cultures. One may ask if accommodation, which has always been the enemy of authentic Christianity, should give up its place to assimilation.

When we come back to Rainisoalambo, we can say that the knowledge of how to use the revival in the established Church helped the Church to be indigenized, because through the revival’s teachings and preaching, the people of God grasped the full Gospel. The revival is a good instrument for indigenization. Through the revival movement, Rainisoalambo taught his followers the “three selves” of indigenization: self-governance, self-propagation, and self-support. At the present time, when the Protestant churches in Madagascar reach their independence through self-government, self-propagation, and self-support; it is from maintaining Rainisoalambo’s teachings. The revival movement started by Rainisoalambo gave strength to and had an important impact on the Church; he revitalized the Malagasy Protestant churches.

The work of Rainisoalambo is very close to that of William Wade Harris from Liberia, and Simon Kimbangu from Congo. These three people created an indigenous religion through the revival movement under colonial rule. Apart from their preaching, they healed and urged people to throw away or burn their fetishes. But the followers of Harris and Kimbangu built independent churches that bear their names, unlike Rainisoalambo who still remained in the established Church, protected by the Church and could freely develop his movement, even during the colonial period.

The contribution of Rainisoalambo, the father of the revivals, to the indigenization of the Malagasy Protestant churches distinguished the Malagasy Church from most other churches in the world, because the Malagasy can freely express their faith within their own culture, manage the Church themselves without influence of missionaries, propagate the Gospel through indigenous pastors, evangelists and *iraka*, support the Church and the Christian way of life. But the Church could progress and develop, by keeping the following points in mind:

- 1) By grasping the sense of indigenization, because many Christians still consider the use of some aspect of culture in worship services, such as clapping the hands, drumming, dancing, etc., as "pagan".
- 2) By changing the training of *iraka* into the training of indigenous missionaries.
- 3) By modernizing the cooperative labour through the use of modern materials, for example: plough or tractors
- 4) By urging the Christians, especially the youth, to use their indigenous talents such as composition of hymns, use of traditional music and instruments in services.

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